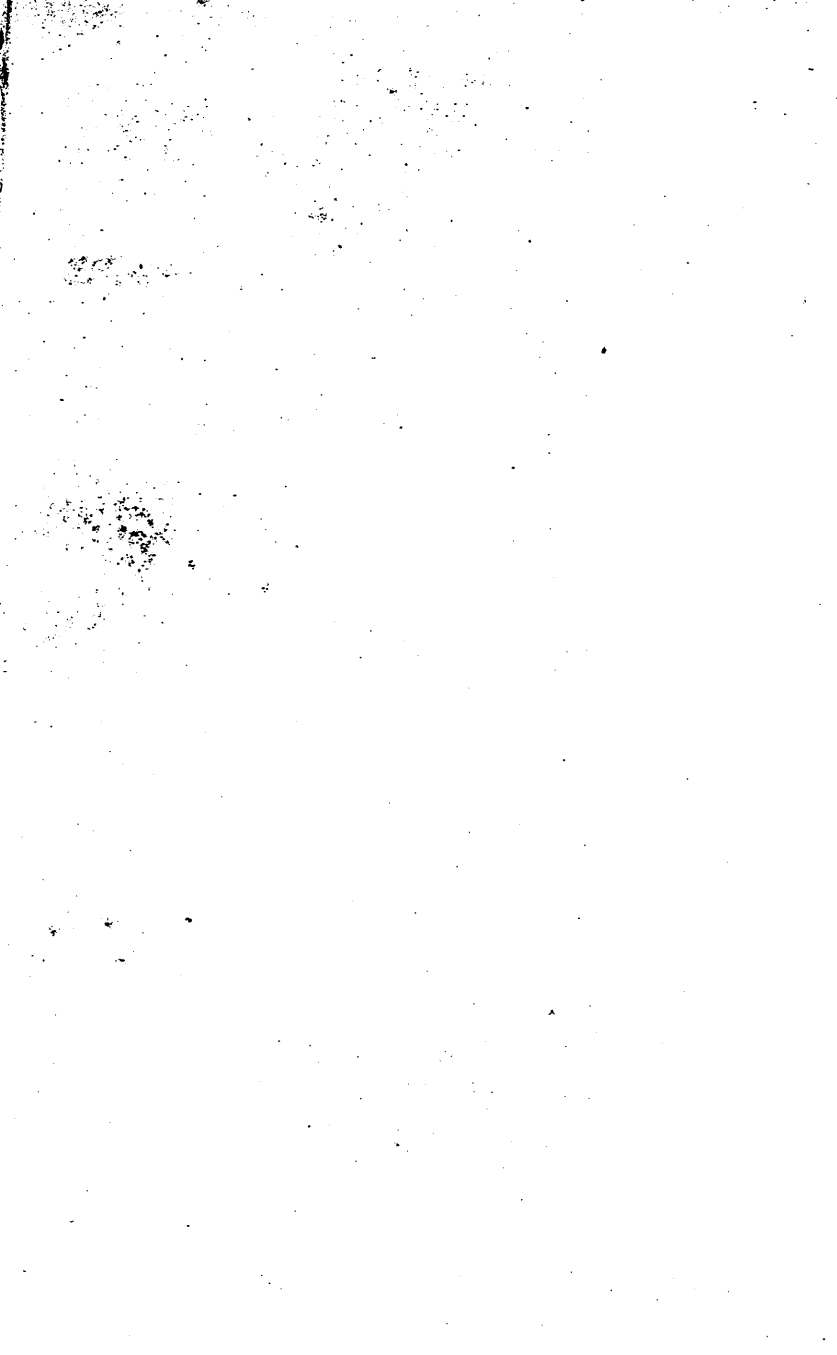




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A

FAMILIAR TREATISE

ON

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM,

ILLUSTRATED WITH ENGRAVINGS,

DESIGNED FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS AND BAPTIZED CHILDREN,

BY JAMES ✓ WOOD, D. D.

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

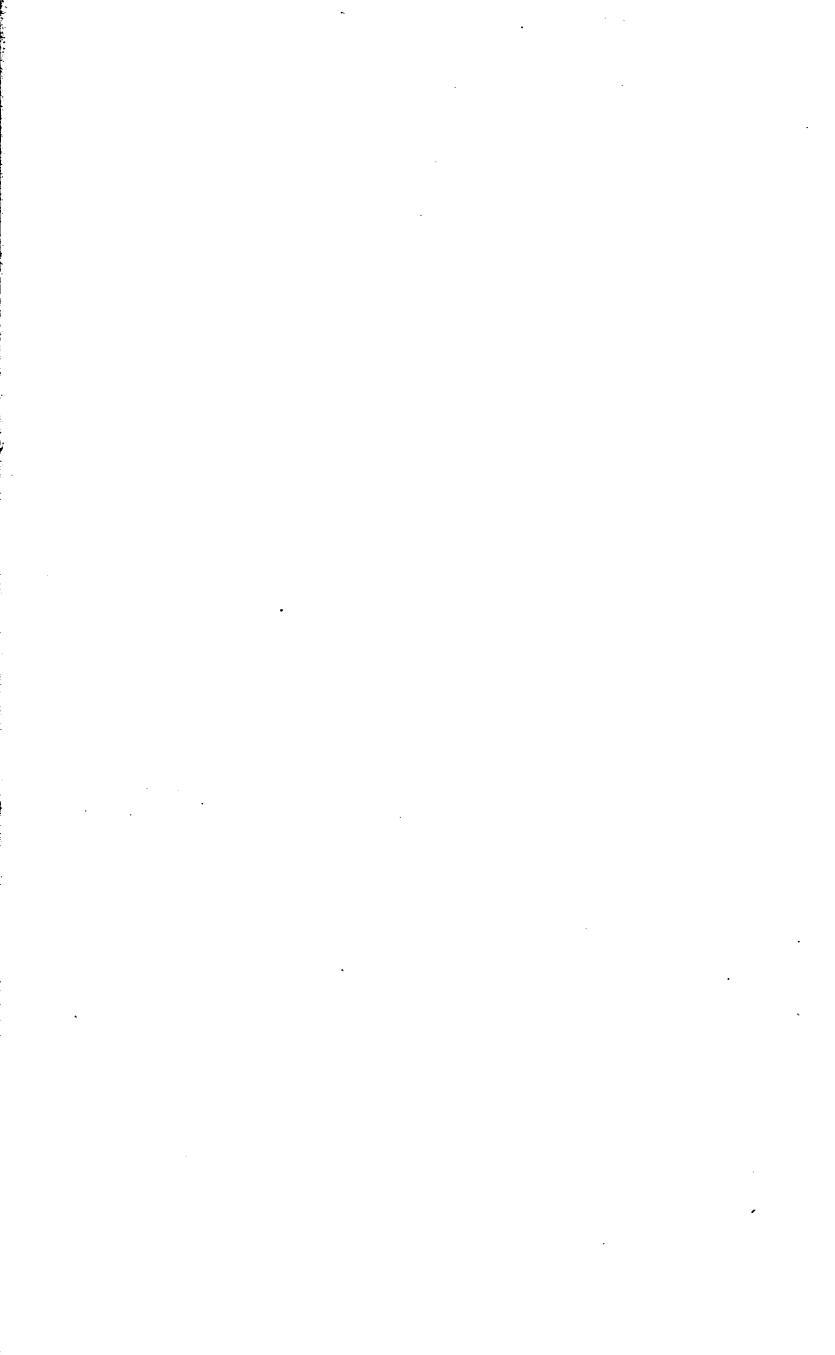
THE following treatise is not designed for the learned. The reader therefore need not expect to find any attempt at learned criticism. The first part, except a few additions now made, was published seventeen years ago, and addressed to a young convert, one of the author's pastoral charge, for whose special benefit it was written. I prepared it, as I then said in an introductory note, "not because there are no works on the subject which I for the most part approve, nor because I consider myself capable of writing with greater, or even equal ability with many whose writings are before the public; but because most of the works on this subject are either too long, are written with too much acrimony, or are not sufficiently simple for common readers."

I am induced to publish another edition of part first, together with a second part, of which I had given some intimation in my introduction to Part I., by a communication recently received from a valuable friend and a prominent, influential pastor, who after requesting me to publish or allow him to publish a new edition of Part I., and also to publish Part II., writes as follows: "There can be no doubt of

your duty to bring out the whole of this matter. Your Part I. is of more practical value to me than any other treatise." Were I at liberty to mention the name of the writer, it would add weight to the opinion here expressed, and be regarded as a sufficient reason why a request coming to me from such a source, and urged by such a reason ought not to be disregarded. I shall also add a 3d Part on the importance of christian baptism. Besides the hope that it may be useful to young converts who may desire to peruse a brief and plain treatise on this subject, it has occurred to me, especially while preparing the second and third part, that it may perhaps be used with advantage by christian parents in instructing the youthful members of their families, who ought to be made acquainted in early life with the teachings of scripture in reference to this ordinance, and particularly with the nature of their relation to the church as baptized children, and the solemn obligation thereby devolving upon them to devote themselves to the service of Christ.

To every one who may be disposed to give it a perusal, I would respectfully say let the scripture proofs and the reasoning connected with them, be examined with due attention and candor. And whatever may be the conclusion at which you arrive, do not indulge an uncharitable or censorious spirit toward those who differ from you. One of the brightest ornaments of the christian is charity; which though it is perfectly consistent with a firm adherence to what we deem to be truth, is nevertheless

so expansive in its influence, that it overleaps the boundaries of sectarian prejudice, and extends the hand of fellowship to the whole family of true disciples.



PART I.

WHAT IS THE SCRIPTURAL MODE OF ADMINISTERING THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM.

It is supposed by some that unless the ordinance is administered in a particular way, it cannot be properly called baptism, or be regarded as valid; and that the person so receiving it is to be treated as unbaptised, until it shall be administered to him by that particular mode. Those who maintain this ground practice immersion, which they consider essential to the ordinance.

It is not our design to advocate any one mode to the exclusion of every other. The validity of the ordinance consists as we think in its being administered by a person duly authorised, and in the name of the Holy Trinity; and not in any particular way of applying the water. But while we regard the ordinance as valid in whatever way it is administered, our examination of the scriptures has led us to a very different conclusion in respect to the mode from that which is practised by those first alluded to. Instead of finding that the Bible establishes immersion as the only mode, we think it furnishes much more evidence in favor of sprinkling, than of immersion.

I. *The baptism of our Savior.*

There is no occurrence referred to so frequently to

prove that christians ought to be immersed as the baptism of our Savior. It is often said to young converts as well as to older christians, how can you expect to have much spiritual enjoyment, so long as you neglect so plain and important a duty, as following Christ into the water, and being buried with him by baptism? And such has been sometimes the effect of this appeal upon the ignorant and unreflecting, that in one case, within our knowledge, a man who had been previously baptised by sprinkling, was unwilling to defer being immersed for a single week, for fear, as he said, he should die before he should have the opportunity of following his Lord into the water.

On this subject we may remark:

1. That it will appear from a consideration of the design of Christ's baptism that it was not intended as an example for us. What the design of it was we shall see hereafter. At present it is sufficient to observe that his command for us to be baptized, was not given in connection with his own baptism; but after his resurrection, and just before his ascension into heaven. See Mat. 28: 19. But

2. Inasmuch as Christ appointed baptism to be an ordinance in his church, his own baptism, which had taken place several years before, though it had a different design from christian baptism, may be supposed to furnish some evidence as to the proper mode of administering it.

3. The evidence derived from Christ's baptism, so far from proving immersion to be the exclusive mode, is decidedly in favor of sprinkling.

The proof of this is short and simple. It rests upon two well established facts, viz: that the design of his baptism was to introduce him into his official work as the Mesiah; particularly into the office of Priest, which was the basis of the other two offices; and that the priests were required, as a part of their consecration to their office, to be sprinkled with water. These two facts taken together, shew beyond any reasonable doubt, that the ordinance was administered by sprinkling.

The design of Christ's baptism, we said, was to introduce him in a regular way according to the established usage of the Jewish Church into the office of Priest. At first John not understanding his design was unwilling to baptize him; "saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But Jesus said unto him, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Mat. 3: 15. The answer was satisfactory to John, and he proceeded immediately to administer the ordinance. But what did Christ mean by this reply: "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness?" What righteousness? He meant the righteousness, i. e. the requirements of the law of Moses concerning the priesthood. As he had now arrived at thirty years of age—the time at which the priests were to enter upon their office; and as he was about to enter upon his official duties, it was necessary that he should be consecrated according to the Levitical law: so that when he should begin to preach and perform other official acts, no objection could be made against his ministry, from his not being properly authorized.

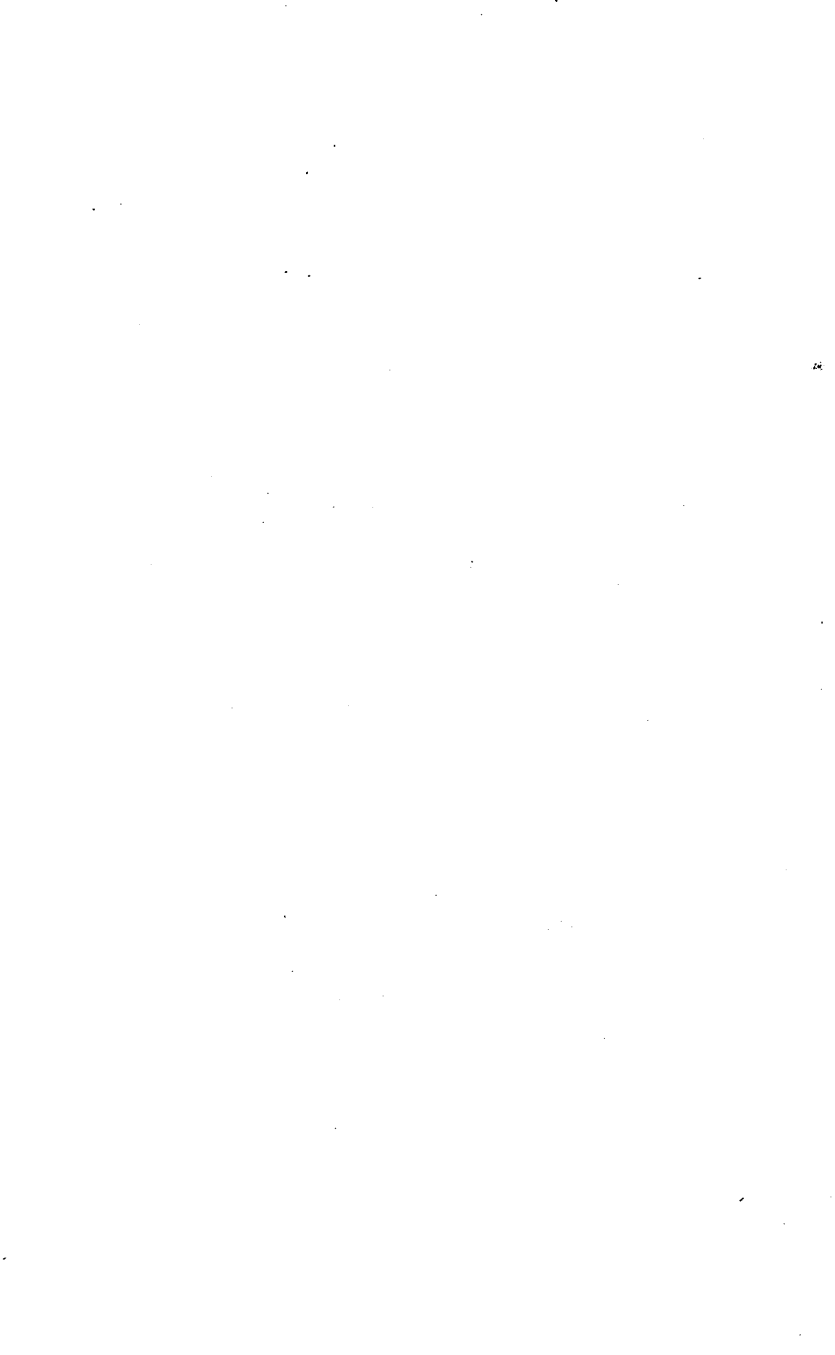
Do you inquire how we know this to have been his meaning? We reply that when "the chief priests and elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, by what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" he referred them to his baptism by John. "And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or of men?" By this he evidently designed to be understood, that if they would allow John's baptism to be from heaven, they must admit his, that is, Christ's authority; because John baptized him in order to introduce him into the Priest's office. And it is evident also that they did understand him in this manner; and hence they durst not answer the question, lest they should be compelled to acknowledge that he was the Messiah. Mat. 21: 23-27.

Another proof that his baptism was designed to induct him into the Priest's office is derived from the fact that that occurrence is identified in the scriptures with his anointing to this office. Very soon after that ordinance was administered to him he began to preach. "From that time Jesus began to preach." Mat. 4: 17. And having read the following passage in Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel," &c., he commenced his discourse by saying, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Luke 4: 16-21. We ask how was that scripture

BAPTISM OF CHRIST.



I have in my possession a volume with six ancient engravings similar to this, the oldest of which bears date A. D. 401. See Taylor's *Apostolic Baptism*. Christ is standing in the Jordan, and John the Baptist is represented in one of these as applying water with the hand, and in others with a perforated vessel, through the holes of which the water is falling in small streams on the Savior's head.



then fulfilled? The connection clearly shows that it was fulfilled by his having been just anointed to preach the gospel. He had been designated to this office long before, even from everlasting. But he was not set apart until now. And hence he never appeared before the public as a teacher until this time. And now he would not do it without first showing to the people his authority; lest they should say that he was assuming an office to which he had not been regularly consecrated. Accordingly he introduced himself by reading the prophecy concerning the anointing of the Messiah, and by declaring that that scripture was then fulfilled; that he had been anointed to the work assigned him by his Father, and would therefore on that occasion commence the discharge of his official duties.

But when did his anointing take place? Evidently at his baptism, which had occurred a little before this time—when the Holy Spirit descended and sat upon him in the form of a dove. This we believe is not denied by any. But if proof is demanded, the following is sufficient: “The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; (he is Lord of all;) that word I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began in Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power.” Acts 10: 36–38. Here John’s baptism and Christ’s anointing are referred to the same period. It is expressly said that the word declaring him to be anointed began after

the commencement of John's baptism. And it is clearly implied that the act itself of anointing him to his office took place at that time; because immediately after his baptism by John and not before, he began to work miracles; and his working of miracles is associated with his anointing. "Anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power." Now every reader of the Bible knows that anointing was a part of the consecration of the priests to their office. Consequently the baptism of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him, must have been designed to induct him into that office.

Since then the design of Christ's baptism was to induct him into the Priest's office, we have only to refer, in order to show how he was baptized, to the consecration of the Priests, as we find it recorded in the Bible. "And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation and wash them with water. And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him and sanctify him that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats; and thou shalt anoint them as thou didst anoint their father that they may minister unto me in the priest's office; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations." Ex. 40: 12-15.

Their anointing was to be performed as follows: "Then shalt thou take the anointing oil and pour it upon his head and anoint him." Ex. 29: 7. This we have already shown was done to our Savior by

the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him immediately after he was baptized. "And lo the heavens were opened unto him, and he [John] saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him." Mat. 3: 16.

But the Priests were not only to be anointed with oil, but washed with water. This was performed upon our Savior by his baptism; which corresponded even in the order of time with the washing of the priests. They were to be first washed, and then anointed. So our Savior was first baptized, and then the Holy Spirit descended and rested upon him; thus "anointing him" in a miraculous manner, "with the oil of gladness above his fellows."

The only question now is, by what mode were the priests to be washed? We reply that in the consecration of Aaron and his sons, all that is said by which we can determine the mode, is that they were to be washed with water contained in a laver or bason that was placed at the door of the tabernacle, and which was to stand there from day to day for the priests to wash their hands and feet in when they were about to engage in their official duties. Ex. 40: 30-32. This circumstance affords at least probable evidence that they were not immersed. But the matter was not left here. The whole tribe of Levi were to be consecrated to the service of the sanctuary as well as Aaron and his sons. And in the account which is left of the consecration of the Levites, we have recorded in a specific and particular manner what in the case of the others was ex-

pressed in general terms. In the one case it simply says, "thou shalt wash them with water." But in the other it informs us in what way this must be done. "And thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them: sprinkle water of purifying upon them." Num. 8: 7. Thus the mode of applying the water was settled by divine appointment; which, it is fair to conclude, applied to the priests as well as to the Levites; since in the absence of scripture testimony, no reason can be given why the latter were required to be sprinkled and the former immersed.

Now who can hesitate for a moment, with this fact before him, unless there is express testimony to the contrary, to admit that Christ must have been baptized by sprinkling? Would he in his induction into the Priest's office deviate from the order of his Father's house, when in every other respect he was so exact in the observance of the Levitical law? The supposition cannot be admitted. We repeat it then, he must, as appears to us, have been baptized by sprinkling. And consequently his baptism so far as it affords any evidence on the subject, is decidedly in favor of that mode.

Those texts which are relied on to prove his immersion will be considered hereafter. We would notice them now, if they affected the preceding argument; that by balancing the two together we might estimate their comparative weight. But as the above proof is entirely independent of those texts, and as we think, not contradicted by them, we shall defer the consideration of them, in order to take

them up in connection with some others of a similar character. The same course will also be pursued in relation to the baptism of the Eunuch which we are now to consider.

II. *The Baptism of the Eunuch.*

The account of the Eunuch's baptism is recorded in the 8th chapter of the Acts, commencing at the 26th verse. By reading this account it will be perceived that when Philip joined himself to the chariot, the Eunuch was reading a passage in the prophecy of Isaiah; and that Philip "began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus." The passage which he was reading is in the 53d chapter of Isaiah, the 7th and 8th verses. But if you consult the passage, you will perceive that he was then in the very middle of the subject, which commenced at the 13th verse of the preceding chapter, and extended to the end of the chapter which he was reading. All these verses then may be justly considered as forming the basis of Philip's discourse. As you read them, recollect that the Bible was not then divided, as it now is, into chapters and verses.

Now notice another fact, viz: that the proposal for the Eunuch to be baptized came from the Eunuch himself. "And as they went on their way they came to a certain water: and the Eunuch said, see here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Of course he must have known that baptism was an ordinance of the Christian church. But where did he obtain this knowledge? He had just been up to Jerusalem to worship; but not with the disciples of

Christ. Though a Gentile by birth, he was, as to his religion, a Jew; and while at Jerusalem, he would be likely to mingle exclusively with the Jews; who thought too meanly of the infant-church of Christ, to give him any account of its organization. It is reasonable to suppose that they would studiously avoid giving him any information as to the existence of this new sect; lest by some means he might become tinctured with their doctrines and carry the knowledge of them to his own country. But if they spoke at all, it would be to mention such circumstances as would be calculated to fix upon his mind an invincible prejudice against the Savior and his disciples. Christian baptism would not therefore form any part of their conversation.

To us it seems quite clear that he could have received this information from no other source than from the preaching of Philip. And if not, then Philip in expounding the Prophecy of the Messiah which the Eunuch was reading, must have preached baptism. Now read the whole prophecy, beginning at the 52d chapter and 13th verse, and tell us in what part of it he found any thing which led him to speak about baptism. He must have found it in the 15th verse of the 52d chapter. "So shall he sprinkle many nations." By analyzing this text we shall be able to ascertain how the Eunuch was baptized.

1. The word "he," refers to the Messiah. "Of whom spake the prophet this," said the Eunuch to Philip, "of himself or some other man? And Philip began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus."

BAPTISM OF THE EUNUCH.



In several ancient cuts, candidates for baptism are represented as kneeling and the administrator as pouring water on the head with some kind of vessel.

2. The phrase "many nations" refers to the Gentiles; who, if they believed, were to receive the ordinance of baptism, and be admitted into the Christian church, no less than the Jews. This declaration was probably made by Philip; as we infer from the request of the Eunuch, (who was a Gentile by birth,) to be baptized—a request which would be very natural after such a declaration from Philip. "May the many Gentile nations be admitted as well as the Jews, to the Messiah's kingdom, and is baptism the initiatory ordinance? What doth hinder me, who belong to one of those many nations, from receiving the ordinance?" Then upon his declaring that he believed, Philip proceeded to baptize him.

3. The word "sprinkle" needs no explanation. The only question which can arise concerning it is, whether it refers to water baptism or to spiritual cleansing. Probably it refers to both. But as this is not essential to our argument, we are not anxious at present to decide. If Philip gave the Eunuch his first ideas concerning Christian baptism by expounding to him that text, it is clear that he would teach him that mode of administering the ordinance which corresponded with the language of the prophecy; whether the ordinance itself was primarily referred to, or that spiritual cleansing of which the ordinance is a symbol. And it is equally clear (for consistency required it,) that he must have practiced according to the same mode; i. e. by sprinkling.

On the supposition that he immersed him, he must have addressed the Eunuch in language like the fol-

lowing: "My Gentile brother, I have been telling you of the effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles, which is to take place under the gospel, and their introduction into the Christian church by baptism; agreeably to the prophecy, "So shall he sprinkle many nations." But I must inform you that we do not in our practice adhere to the language of the prophecy in every particular—we do not sprinkle, but immerse." How improbable—nay, how absurd is such a supposition as this! We appeal then to the candor of every reader, whether the evidence is not strong, if not decisive, that the Eunuch was baptized by sprinkling.

III. *Other instances of Baptism recorded in the New Testament.*

Since we have established the fact that our Savior and the Eunuch were baptized by sprinkling—which are the only cases in the Bible in which the persons baptized are said to have gone into the water; it is unnecessary to refer to any other examples. For if those who went into the water in order to be baptized, were sprinkled, we may safely conclude that those were also sprinkled who do not appear to have gone near any water; but to have been baptized in the house. Such was the case with those who were converted on the day of Pentecost—Acts 2: 2; with Paul—Acts 9: 18; with Cornelius and his friends—Acts 10: 48; and with the jailor and his household—Acts 16: 33.

The only exception to this, besides what has been considered, is the baptism of Lydia, which it is pro-

bable was performed "by a river side." Concerning this the following remark, we think, will be in point, viz: that in baptizing her there, the apostles pursued what appears to have been their uniform course—which was to baptize their converts on the very spot where they were converted. We do not read of a single instance of their leaving the place where they happened to be when the individuals were converted, in order to administer this ordinance. If they were in the city of Jerusalem, as they were on the day of Pentecost, the ordinance was administered there. If they were in a private dwelling, as in the case of Cornelius, it was attended to there. If they were in a prison, as was the fact, when the jailor was converted, baptism was performed in the outer court of that building. "And brought them out"—Acts 16: 30—i. e. from "the inner prison"—v. 24—into the outer court—or room for debtors and petty criminals. And if they were beside a brook or river as in the case of the Eunuch and of Lydia, this sacrament was administered there.

The fact therefore that she was baptized "by a river side," (admitting it to be so, though it is not stated explicitly—see Acts 16: 13–15,) is just what we should expect to hear—inasmuch as that was the place of her conversion. This woman and certain other devout Jews were accustomed to resort there on the Sabbath for prayer; that in this pleasant and retired place, without the walls of the city, they might worship God, without being disturbed in their

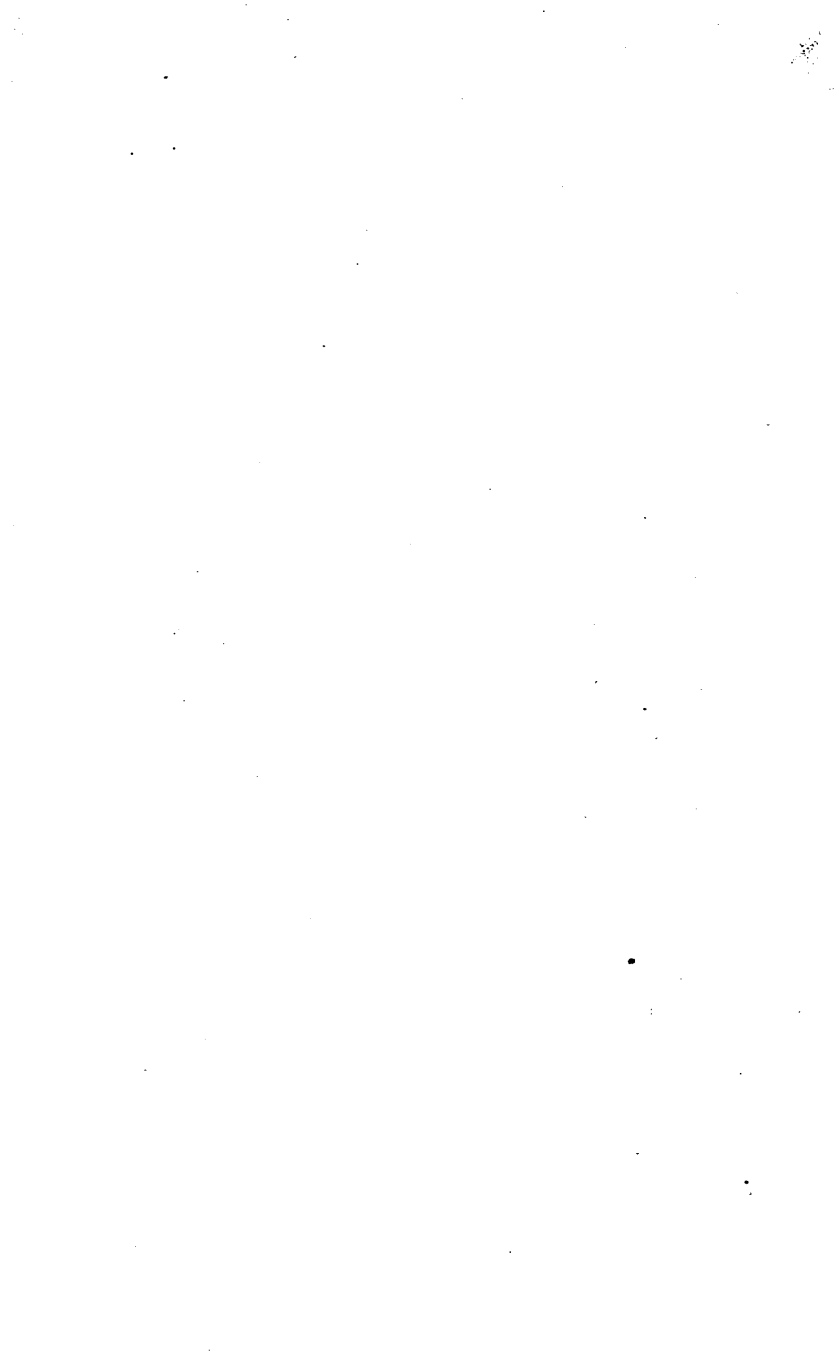
devotions by the idolatrous and persecuting inhabitants of Philippi. To this place Paul resorted, as was very natural, on the Sabbath after his arrival at that city, and preached the gospel. He was acquainted with the fact that his Jewish brethren who resided in that city, were accustomed to assemble there for worship; and he went there to worship with them, and to make known the religion of Christ. His was the first gospel sermon ever preached there, and Lydia was the first Christian convert. Of course he did not select the spot for the purpose of baptizing, as some profess to believe; for it was not selected by him at all. It had been selected before by certain pious Jews—not for baptizing, but for prayer. “Where prayer was wont to be made”—Acts 16: 13. Gr. “where there was wont to be a proseuchœ”—a Jewish place of prayer. Paul’s presence there was wholly providential. And his preaching having been blessed to the conversion of Lydia, her baptism, according to the rule just given, by which the apostles were usually governed, would follow as a matter of course, whether she had been in that place or in any other. But as not a syllable is said about the mode in which it was administered, we have reason to believe, judging from the examples which we have already considered, that it was performed by sprinkling. There is, to say the least, no evidence to the contrary.

IV. *Evidence concerning the mode of Baptism, derived from some Scripture facts in the history and customs of the Jews.*

**BAPTISM OF THE ISRAELITES IN THE
CLOUD AND IN THE SEA.**



1 Cor. 10 : 2.



This evidence is two fold—first from the baptism of the Israelites in the cloud and in the sea; and secondly from their religious purifications. The account of the former is found in 1st Cor. 10: 2. “And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”

The analogy between this and Christian baptism is the following, viz: that the Israelites are said to have been initiated by baptism into the Jewish church, in the same manner as the disciples of Christ are into the Christian church. Compare the above passage with Rom. 6: 3, and Gal. 3: 27. In these texts Christians are said to be baptized “into Christ”—a phraseology exactly corresponding with that which is used in regard to the Israelites. “Unto or into Moses”—“into or unto Christ.” In the Greek the prepositions preceding Christ and Moses are one and the same; which is rendered either *into* or *unto*, at pleasure.

This exact correspondence in the phraseology employed in the two cases, shews that when the Apostle used the term baptism in relation to the Israelites, he had Christian baptism in his mind; and that he considered the one as adapted to illustrate the other.

But how were they baptized in the sea? Not by immersion, for they went over on dry ground. Ex. 14: 22–29. It must have been by the sprinkling of the spray from the water; which was “a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.” Nor could they have been immersed in the cloud. For

the cloud was before and above them. "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud." Again, "He spread a cloud for a covering." Ex. 13: 21. Ps. 105: 39. They could have been baptized in no other way, as we can perceive, than by the sprinkling of mist or rain from the cloud. So far therefore as this example proves any thing on the subject, it goes to establish the fact that sprinkling is the most proper mode of Christian baptism.

The other particular to which we referred under this head was the Jewish purifications. These being of a religious nature, and the mode of performing them being of divine appointment, and being also called baptisms in several places of scripture afford much proof as to the proper mode of administering that ordinance.

They are called baptisms in the following texts: "And when they come from the market, except they wash (Gr. baptize,) they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washings (Gr. baptisms,) of cups and pots and brazen vessels and tables." Mark: 4. Also Heb. 9: 10. "Which stood only in meats and drinks and divers washings (Gr. baptisms;) and carnal ordinances." These texts shew that Mark and Paul considered the word baptism a fit term to employ in order to describe the Jewish purifications. Or in other words, they prove that baptism was regarded by the writers of the New Testament as essentially the same thing with the religious washings of the Jews. It is therefore proper for us in speaking on the subject to rea-

son from the one to the other. Now it is well known to those who have carefully read the scriptures, that the Jewish purifications were performed in most cases by sprinkling. See Lev. 14: 7, 16, 27, 51. Num. 8: 7, and 19: 18, 19. The inference then is that sprinkling is a scriptural mode of Christian baptism.

V. Evidence concerning the mode of Baptism derived from the blood of Christ, and the influences of the Holy Spirit.

First, the blood of Christ. This is never called in scripture the blood of dipping or immersion; but the blood of sprinkling. "To Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling." Heb. 12: 24. "Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ." 1st Pet. 1: 2. This has allusion to the sprinkling of blood so often practised in the Jewish sacrifices; and it represents the purification of the conscience through the application of Christ's blood. In like manner baptism is designed to represent something very similar, viz: the purification of the heart. The fact therefore that the former is denominated the blood of sprinkling, is a proof that the latter ought to be administered in the same way.

Secondly, the influences of the Holy Spirit are likewise represented in scripture by sprinkling, or pouring*—never by immersion. The following texts

* We have not before now used the term pouring, because the bible does not use it we believe in relation to any of the points which we have yet treated. To describe the influences of the Holy Spirit, this term is

among many others are in point. "I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed." Isa. 44: 3. "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." Joel 2: 28. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean." Ezek. 36: 25. In accordance with these texts, Peter said on the day of Pentecost, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost he hath shed forth"—mark, *shed forth* "this which ye now see and hear." Acts 2: 33. Now this shedding forth of the Holy Spirit is called baptism. Acts 1: 5. "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." And immediately after three thousand of them had been thus baptized; i. e. with the Holy Ghost shed forth upon them; they received water baptism as the symbol of it. Of course if the symbol corresponded with the manner of the Spirit's descent, it must have been performed by sprinkling or pouring.

Again, the *design* of baptism is to represent the work of the Holy Spirit. This is evident from such texts as the following: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." 1st Cor. 12: 13. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Gal. 3: 27. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive

used as well as sprinkling; and we therefore introduce it. These two modes however are essentially the same—both being performed by applying the water to the subject, and not the subject to the water, as in the case of immersion.

BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.



Acts 1: 5, compared with chap. 2: 33.

the gift of the Holy Ghost." "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord." Acts 2: 38, and 22: 16. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3: 5. In some of these texts the word baptize is used figuratively and is evidently designed to represent the work of the Holy Spirit. In the others it refers to water baptism; but is used (as appears plain from the connection,) as the external sign of the same internal work of the Spirit which is represented by the word in its figurative sense—a coincidence that shews this to be the design of the ordinance. But the Spirit's influences as we have just seen are expressed in the scriptures by sprinkling or pouring; never by immersion. Since then baptism is an ordinance which is designed to represent those influences, it is manifest that the most appropriate mode of administering it is by sprinkling or pouring.

VI. *A consideration of the word Baptize.*

We shall now proceed to consider those words and phrases which are relied upon to prove immersion.

The word baptize is claimed as furnishing clear proof in favor of immersion. Some are so confident that it signifies immerse, that in administering the ordinance they say—at least one is known to have said thus—"I immerse thee," instead of "I baptize thee." But we think it will be found on examination, that the etymology of the word is by no means decisive in favor of immersion. "While we do not deny," says an able writer, "that this word

often signifies to dip, we maintain, that it is also frequently used with much greater latitude, and may mean any application of a body to a liquid, by which any portion of the liquid, however small, is imbibed. In confirmation of this position, we appeal to all the Greek lexicons of credit: in these the original word is explained as meaning, not only to dip, but to wash, to stain, to dye, &c. And we have fully satisfied ourselves, that the primary radical sense of this word is, not to immerse but to dye; that to dip is a secondary signification, derived from the circumstance that dying was usually performed by immersing the substance to be colored in a vat; that nevertheless, the word is by no means confined to dying by immersion, but with equal propriety signifies the staining or coloring of a thing, in any other way, even where the idea of dipping is out of the question." We have introduced the above quotation because those for whom we now write are not able to appreciate critical remarks, but must depend for information concerning the original word upon the authority of the learned.

But though you may not be able to trace the etymology of the word, there is another method of arriving at its meaning, which you can understand as well as those who are acquainted with the Greek. It consists in comparing together those texts of scripture in which the word occurs, and ascertaining how it is applied by the sacred writers. If the word means primarily and uniformly to immerse, why do we find it employed to represent the Jewish purifica-

tions, which were usually performed by sprinkling? and also to describe the influences of the Holy Spirit, which are always expressed, where water is alluded to at all, by sprinkling or pouring?

You are able also as well as the learned to reason from the design of baptism. It is designed to signify, as has been shown, the work of the Holy Spirit. This is so clear from the various uses of the word in scripture that we wonder how any can entertain a different opinion. But if the operations of the Holy Spirit are designed to be represented by it, and these operations are uniformly described where water is referred to, by sprinkling or pouring; then it cannot be supposed that the sacred writers would have selected a word to represent those operations which uniformly signifies to immerse.

There are likewise some *facts* which have a bearing on this point, and the force of which every reader can appreciate. One is that there is strong evidence that Christ was not immersed; and yet the word baptize is employed to express the ordinance by which he was inducted into his priestly office. Another is that Christ employed the word in his last commission to his disciples, "saying, go teach all nations, baptizing them;" and yet but a few weeks before this commission was given, he discountenanced the practice of immersion in religious purifications. "He that is washed, said he to Peter, needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." John 13: 9, 10. By reading this text in its connection we shall perceive that so far from intro-

ducing the practice of washing the body all over as a religious rite, he discouraged it; by declaring it unnecessary, and by refusing to gratify Peter who wished to have water applied to him in a more profuse manner than our Savior was using it.

A third fact is that in the use of other words employed to express the same things which are represented by baptism, the sacred writers very seldom make use of words that signify immersion, but very frequently those that signify sprinkling or pouring. The word immerse never occurs a single time in the bible; and the word dip is never used but in a single instance where religious cleansing is referred to, except for the purpose of sprinkling the blood or water thus dipped up upon the person or thing to be cleansed. See Lev. 4: 6; and 14: 6, 7. Also, Num. 19: 18.

The single case referred to is that of Naaman, who to be cured of the leprosy, dipped himself seven times in Jordan. 2nd Kings, 5: 14. Besides this there is not a single example in the bible of purification being performed by dipping or immersing the body in water. And it is not clear that Naaman's dipping himself consisted in immersing the whole body.

On the other hand, words which represent a sparing application of water are of very frequent occurrence. The term *sprinkle*, used either in a literal or figurative sense, and in reference either to blood or water; the term *pour*, referring generally to the influences of the Holy Spirit; and other similar terms,

such as *drop, distil, shed*, &c. occur, taken all together, more than thirty times; including in the enumeration only those texts which throw light on the subject of baptism. There are many other passages where some of these words occur, which are not embraced in this statement. Now is it probable that the inspired writers would adopt a word to express the ordinance of baptism which, on the supposition that it signifies nothing but immerse, bears so little analogy to the common phraseology of the bible? If not, (and if the other facts mentioned are allowed to have any weight,) then we may conclude that the use of the word baptize, to say the least, is not decisive in favor of immersion; but that it is perfectly consistent with the adoption of a different mode.

VII. *A consideration of the phrases "went down into the water"—"Because there was much water there," &c.*

The phrases "went down into the water," and "come up out of the water" occur no where in the bible in connection with this subject except in the account of the baptism of our Savior and of the Eunuch. They will therefore after what has been said concerning those cases require but a few remarks.

1. It is capable of being shown by a critical examination of the original text, that these phrases do not necessarily imply that the persons referred to, actually went into the water at all, but might have been baptized standing or kneeling by the side of it. But without insisting upon this, since it can only be understood by the Greek scholar, we observe,

2. That allowing them all the force which they have as they read in our English bibles, they cannot be supposed even by the advocates of immersion, to furnish any thing more than the evidence of probability. It is not pretended by any body that "going into the water" is baptism: for the administrators themselves went into the water, as well as the persons baptized. All that can be said is, that as they went into the water, it is probable they were immersed—for if they were not immersed why did they go into the water at all? This is the whole strength of the argument. But can no reason be assigned why they did this, except for the purpose of immersion? In the case of the Eunuch, an obvious and probable reason was that he was travelling in a desert, and it may be presumed, had no vessel to dip up the water and bring it to the chariot. And the reason for our Savior's doing it may be found in close connection with that which might be given for John's preaching in the open air. The latter was done from necessity on account of the great multitudes who attended on his ministry. And in the selection of a spot for this purpose, he would naturally select one that would be the most convenient for his hearers, viz: near that noble river—the only one in the land—which rendered the country around it productive, the atmosphere salubrious, and would contribute otherwise to the convenience of the people. And being assembled on that spot, it was more natural for them, considering the manners and customs in the east at that time, to descend the bank of the

river to receive baptism than to have the water brought to them. This they probably did; and our Savior in conformity with their example pursued the same course. But,

3. If no satisfactory reason could be given why they went down into the water, the evidence from this fact in favor of immersion does not amount even to probability, when it is recollected that we have proved from other sources that both Christ and the Eunuch were baptized by sprinkling. The circumstance of their going into the water weighs nothing in our estimation against the proof which has already been adduced. The same may be said concerning the phrase "in Jordan." Jesus "was baptized of John in Jordan;" (Mark 1: 9;) and yet he was sprinkled. If then the multitudes whom John baptized "in Jordan" followed the example of their Savior in every particular, they were sprinkled too.

Nor does John's "baptizing in Enon because there was much water there," prove that he immersed. There were other reasons besides immersion which might have induced him to select that spot—particularly the accommodation of the multitude who resorted to him and who would need "much water" to wash and cook with and for themselves and camels to drink. And again; whatever might have been the reason for taking his stand there, we may infer that it was not for the purpose of immersion, from the fact that at the very time when he was baptizing in Enon "because there was much water there,"

Christ and his disciples were baptizing greater numbers than he was, in another part of the land, viz: in Judea, where large streams did not exist, and where it does not appear from the account that they were beside any stream at all. Compare John 3: 22, 23, with John 4: 1.

We admit however, that the mention of "much water in Enon" seems to imply that John occupied a peculiarly favorable spot for his ministry. If the use of water for *ordinary* purposes is not deemed by all a sufficient reason for his selecting that place, we will add another which may divest the subject of any remaining difficulty. Besides the use of water for ordinary purposes, it is highly probable that it was used *as a preparation* for the ordinance of baptism. The Jews in case of bodily disease or other ceremonial defilement, were required in order to their purification, to bathe themselves in water as a preparation for the sprinkling of water or blood, which succeeded or accompanied the other. See Lev. 14: 8-14, and Num. 19: 19, 20. The strictly religious part of the ceremony was performed by sprinkling. Without this the previous preparatory bathing passed for nothing. See again Num. 19: 20. The object in requiring them to bathe their flesh appears to have been to make them physically clean, because the performance of the rite of sprinkling while their persons were dirty and defiled, would indicate a state of mind, which was dishonorable to God. For this reason they were likewise required to wash or change their garments as a preparation for any solemn act

of devotion. See Gen. 35: 2; Ex. 19: 10, 11, 14. If the people who attended John's ministry conformed in this respect to Jewish usage under similar circumstances, "much water" would be a great convenience for bathing their persons and washing their garments as preliminary to the ordinance of baptism.

In the volume already referred to (Taylor's Apostolic Baptism,) there are found twelve engravings taken from different churches in the east, some of them bearing date as early as A. D. 401 and 454; which represent our blessed Savior, the Emperor Constantine, and others in the act of receiving baptism. From these cuts it appears that the candidate for baptism first bathed himself in water, and then baptism was administered by pouring or sprinkling. In several of them the person receiving the ordinance is represented as standing in a vase up to the waste in water, (Christ is standing in the Jordan,) and the administrator is sprinkling or pouring water on the head. In one of them the candidate has left the vase in which he seems to have bathed himself, and is kneeling near it receiving upon his head the baptismal water. Where did the christians of those times obtain this idea? May they not have received it from the Apostles? If so, and if the Apostles conformed in this respect to John the Baptist, and John conformed to the Mosaic ritual with regard to ceremonial cleansing; most of those words and phrases which appear to favor immersion, can be easily explained by referring them to this preparatory bathing. Though it is not certain that even that was

performed by immersing the whole body, it was an approximation to it, and hence it might become the basis of some allusions in the sacred writings connected with the ordinance of baptism which appear to favor immersion.

It may also give us a clue to the manner in which immersion began to be practiced in administering the ordinance of baptism. This preparatory bathing was confounded with the ordinance itself, and substituted for it, and the sprinkling or pouring of water which succeeded the other was laid aside. And yet if we reason from the analogy of the case, that which was thus laid aside is essential to the ordinance, without which the bathing of the flesh or the immersion of the body (supposing this to have been the mode of performing it,) is to be accounted as nothing. We do not affirm that immersion is invalid; and yet we would much sooner undertake to prove it than to prove sprinkling or pouring to be so.

The phrase "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," may require one or two remarks. The first is that if the mode of baptism is referred to, as some suppose, then I should be inclined to the opinion that sprinkling and not immersion is the only proper way of administering that ordinance. I consider the evidence contained in the bible in favor of sprinkling to be ten fold stronger than for any other mode. But secondly, it is clear from another text of scripture that no reference is had to the mode. It is declared in Heb. 9: 10, that there were divers modes

of baptism: "which stood only in meats and drinks and divers washings"—Gr. divers baptisms. This shows that the ordinance may be properly administered in more ways than one; which could not be the case if the passage under consideration referred to the mode. The meaning of the passage is sufficiently explained by another penned by the same Apostlè. "Now this I say that every one of you saith I am of Paul; and I of Appollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you; or were ye baptised in the name of Paul?" Surely not—"There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Paul never baptized in his own name; nor did Appollos or Peter—but in the name of Christ. What room was there then for division? The apostles had not certainly given occasion for it—because their preaching and their administration of the ordinances, pointed invariably not to themselves, but to Christ, who is all and in all. Compare Eph. 4: 3–5, with 1 Cor. 1: 12, 13.

Again, the phrase "having our bodies washed with pure water," should not be unnoticed. "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." Heb. 10: 22. Upon this we remark:

1st. That the term "*washed*" is very general, and is consistent with any mode of applying the water. But in the present instance the preceding clause appears to fix its meaning: "Having our hearts *sprinkled*, &c." This requires us on the principle of analogy to understand the washing of the body in the last clause to be by sprinkling.

2d. The use of the word "*bodies*" forms no valid objection to this interpretation. By a common figure of speech called synecdoche, the whole of a thing is often employed to express a part and a part is taken for the whole; according to which, the body may be said to be washed when water has been applied only to some part of it. As an example of this see Mat. 26 : 7-12, and Mark 14 : 3-8. A woman brought an alabaster box of precious ointment and poured it on Christ's head. The Savior commended her for this pious act, and said "She is come before hand to anoint my body to the burying." Notice, she poured it on Christ's *head*; but he said it was poured on his *body*, because the head is the principal part of the body. For this reason the forehead is the most appropriate place to sprinkle or pour the water in the administration of baptism. Perhaps this is the foundation of those allusions in Rev. 14 : 1 and 22 : 4; where the one hundred and forty-four thousand whom John saw on Mount Zion in company with the Lamb, had "his Father's name written in their foreheads." Again: we may employ the word "*bodies*," without a figure, and still understand "washed" in the sense of sprinkle. Water sprinkled or poured on the head, if done profusely, will flow down upon the body; in which case the body may be said to be washed as truly in a religious sense as though it were performed by immersion. Thus it was in the anointing of the Jewish high priest, allusion to which is made by the Psalmist, to illustrate the delightful duty of brotherly love:

"It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments." Psalm 133: 2.

VIII. *A consideration of the phrase "Buried with him by baptism."*

The phrase "buried with him by baptism" occurs in two places, viz: Rom. 6: 4, and Col. 2: 12; and is very often referred to to prove the necessity of immersion.

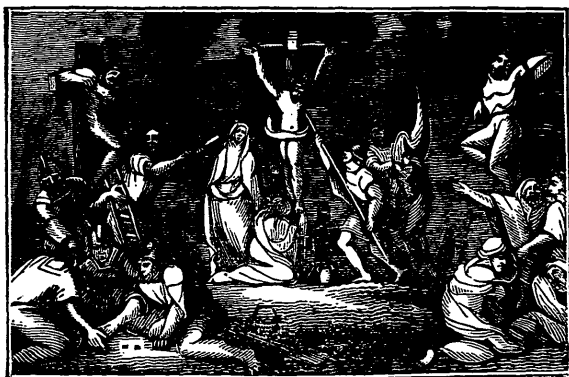
1. It is supposed by some to show that Christ was immersed; and that therefore we cannot be properly baptized in any other mode. But so far from proving that Christ was baptized by immersion, his baptism is not the subject of discourse, but their baptism into Christ. Nor is Christ's baptism referred to even by way of allusion. The imagery employed does not lead us to the river Jordan, but to Mount Calvary. Christ's death on the cross and his burial in the grave, together with his resurrection from the dead, and not his baptism, are the circumstances alluded to by the apostle; and from these circumstances the whole figure is borrowed. This is manifest from a moment's examination of the passage with its connection. But if it should be insisted that Christ's baptism in some sense of the word must be referred to, we observe that his sufferings and death are denominated baptism. "I have a baptism said he to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?" Luke 12: 50. See also Mark 10: 38, 39. In these texts his sufferings in the gar-

den and on the cross are evidently referred to ; and they confirm the opinion which we have advanced ; since they show that if the word baptism in the phrase under consideration refers to Christ at all, it is used in a figurative sense, and alludes to the agonies both of body and soul which he endured in his last moments. All that we intend in the preceding remarks is that no allusion is made to his baptism by water. This is indeed acknowledged by some, who nevertheless rely upon the passage to prove immersion. By such it is supposed,

2. To furnish evidence concerning the design of baptism ; which is, say they, to exhibit the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ ; and it ought therefore, in order to be analogous to the thing signified, to be performed by immersion. But if baptism is designed to exhibit Christ's burial and resurrection, there was in the church a standing memorial of those events for several years before they took place ; which, unless baptism was a type, would have been absurd. And if it was a type, then what was the propriety of continuing it, after the occurring of the events which it typified ? And farther ; if that was the design of it, then baptism and the Lord's supper signify nearly the same thing ; and the practice of both of them at the same time is therefore superfluous. The idea is likewise refuted by the general language of scripture, which does not favor such a sentiment, but gives an entirely different view of the design of baptism. But again,

3. This phrase is supposed to prove that the Ro-

CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION.



man and Colossian Christians were baptized by immersion; and if so, then this must have been the primitive mode. Suppose we admit that immersion was practiced in primitive times, and allow this text to afford proof of it, it would not follow that immersion was the only mode practiced in those times; and of course this text cannot be adduced to prove that immersion is the only and exclusive mode, which it is proper to use at the present time.

But what if it should appear that the apostle has no reference to the mode? The connection as it stands in Romans is as follows: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." A careful perusal of this passage will show that we are not to look to it for the mode of administering the ordinance of baptism, but for the solemn obligations which it imposes upon those who receive it to be dead to sin and alive unto God. The apostle's design in referring to their baptism at all, was to furnish a strong dissuasive against their living in sin; which would lead him to speak not of the mode of baptism but of its nature and import.

This fact alone will account for the character of the figure here used, and assist us to understand it. If he had intended to refer to the mode, we can hardly suppose that he would have drawn his figure from Christ's sufferings and burial. What resemblance has any mode of baptism by water, to the exquisite agony and death of our Savior on the cross? But if the nature and obligations of baptism were the theme of discourse, the figure was well chosen and highly striking. Nor can we conceive how the mode of baptism could be urged as a motive to induce believers to forsake sin. But a reference to its spiritual import was exactly in point.

The language here employed seems to denote that water baptism administered in any form is not the chief thing referred to, but the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The baptism here spoken of is represented as resulting in the destruction of the body of sin and their walking in newness of life—in the crucifixion and burial (called here "planting,") of the old man; and the resurrection or renewal of the soul to a spiritual and holy life. Now such a baptism it is evident cannot be water baptism solely; for this possesses no such efficacy. It is however consistent with the usual language of scripture to include both; the one expressing the work of the Holy Spirit upon their hearts in their conversion and partial sanctification, and the other their solemn duty and engagement to be entirely devoted to the Lord. In each of these senses, the manner in which the subject is treated, was calculated to produce a powerful effect upon their minds.

CHRIST'S BURIAL.





4. A very few remarks will now be sufficient to shew the import and propriety of the phrase under consideration. To the death of Christ succeeded his burial. It was perfectly natural therefore for the apostle, after having spoken of the former to advert to the latter—which was a continuation of the figure that he had begun; and necessary in order to complete it. “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his *death*? Therefore we are *buried* with him by baptism into *death*.” The latter is mentioned as a consequence of the former. “Therefore,” i. e. because we were baptized into his death—were brought by our baptism under the most solemn obligations to die unto sin, in the same manner as he died for it; “therefore” we are to be considered henceforth by profession and engagement, as completely crucified to the world with its affections and lusts, as though we had been buried with Christ in the grave. Burial is a token that the person is considered to be really dead. The apostle therefore alludes to it in order to give additional strength to the figure, asserting thereby that unless their profession of religion was hypocritical they were in fact as well as by engagement “dead to sin.”

And farther; as Christ’s burial was succeeded by his resurrection to a holy and exalted life in heaven, so they were baptized into his death and burial, that the old man of sin being destroyed, they might live a new life of holiness. “Let not sin therefore reign

in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?"—v. 1 and 12. Such, if we understand it, is the import of the Apostle's reasoning. And what more forcible exhortation could he have given to influence those whom he addressed to live holy lives? Christian professor, will you not consider the exhortation as addressed to you; and strive every day of your life to put it into practice.

To conclude this part of the subject, we remark that the preceding discussion shows how little reason those who advocate immersion as the exclusive mode of baptism, have for that confidence which they generally manifest on this subject; as though it was perfectly plain that they are right and every body else is wrong. In order to substantiate their sentiments, they must prove not merely that immersion was sometimes or even generally practiced in primitive times; but always without a single exception—not merely that the scriptures favor immersion more than any other mode; but that they teach that mode alone, while they furnish no support for any other—not merely that immersion is to be preferred and therefore practiced rather than any other mode; but that it is essential to the validity of the ordinance—and consequently that those who have been baptized in any other way are to be considered and treated as unbaptized persons until they are immersed. If it can be proved that a single person was ever sprinkled by the apostles, their system is de-

stroyed. If it can be shown from the general language of scripture that any other mode is valid, even though no example of baptism by any such mode could be adduced, this would also be sufficient to destroy their scheme. And has not such evidence been adduced? We do not profess to have answered every question which may be asked in relation to this subject—nor to have solved every difficulty that may arise in the mind of the reader. This was impracticable, unless we had extended our remarks beyond the limits which we prescribed for ourselves. But the prominent things have been stated on both sides; and we are persuaded that enough has been said to satisfy every unprejudiced reader that those who have adopted the practice of sprinkling or pouring in preference to immersion, have not done so without some reason. There is at least sufficient proof in favor of sprinkling, to warrant us in demanding of the advocates of exclusive immersion, to manifest a little less confidence in their own sentiments, and a little more respect for the opinion of others. As long as so much evidence exists in favor of sprinkling we cannot but think it a little arrogant in them to consider themselves as the only church that is established agreeably to “gospel order,” and to treat all others, though they may acknowledge them to be associations of true believers, as being nevertheless without the pale of the visible church, and not entitled to the privilege of christian communion.

So far indeed are the scriptures from proving immersion to be the exclusive mode, that in our opinion it cannot be positively proved from the bible, that baptism was ever administered in that way. This we think will appear by a recurrence to those texts which are relied upon to prove immersion, and which we have considered in the preceding pages. Those therefore who generally practice sprinkling have as much reason to adopt this as the only proper mode, and to exclude from their communion all who practice immersion, as the latter have to exclude the former.

But we would rather conciliate than censure those with whom we differ on this subject. Though in this particular we consider them as being in an error, we nevertheless regard them as Christians; and we will cherish towards them those kind and fraternal feelings which ought ever to exist between members of the same family. If they reciprocate these feelings we shall rejoice. But if it shall be otherwise, we will remember that they belong to the same brotherhood of Christ with ourselves, and will still love them and co-operate with them, so far as it is practicable, in the advancement of his kingdom—believing that in proportion as we become holy and increase in the knowledge of God, we shall approximate towards each other in christian fellowship, until in heaven, if not before, “the middle wall of partition between us” will be completely broken down, and we shall stand together in the “holy

place" of the celestial temple, offer our sacrifices of praise upon the same altar, eat of the same "peace offerings," and emulate each other in nothing else but in devout adoration before the throne of God and the Lamb.

NOTE.

[This note should have been inserted on the 9th page, in connection with the statement of the argument with regard to the design of Christ's baptism.]

"In the relation of his offices to one another," says Dr. Dick, "the priestly office must be considered as the foundation of the other two. If Christ had not been a priest, he would not have been a prophet and a king; it being evident that, unless salvation had been obtained for us, it could not be revealed and applied. All his acts towards sinners for their deliverance from sin, and their restoration to the favor of God, pre-suppose an atonement by which Divine Justice was satisfied. It was necessary that, as a priest, he should fulfil the condition of the new covenant, before he could administer it as a prophet and a king, for the communication of its blessings." Such being the relation of his offices to each other, there was no necessity of his receiving a distinct and separate consecration to all of them, because his induction into the priest's office virtually introduced him also to the other two. Indeed the *unction* which he received from the Holy Spirit was equally adapted to his three offices; for kings and prophets as well as priests were among the Jews sometimes anointed with oil. So it was predicted of Christ that he should, by one and the same act of the Holy Ghost, be anointed to all these offices. See Ps. 45: 7, Isa 61: 1, and Dan. 9: 14. But his *baptism* which formed a part of his consecration to his official work as the Messiah, has no *counter-part* in the Old Testament, except as it is found in the ceremony of consecration to the office of priest.



PART II.

ARE THE CHILDREN OF BELIEVING PARENTS PROPER SUBJECTS OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

We are often told by those who do not practice infant baptism, "Show us a thus saith the Lord for it, point us to the chapter and verse where it is said 'let infants be baptized,' and we will believe in the doctrine; but until you do this, you must not blame us for rejecting it."

Now, though we cannot find a passage in which the duty of baptizing infants is enjoined by express positive precept, we can arrive at this conclusion by a process which indicates as clearly the will of God as though it were expressed in the form of a positive law. It is not said in so many words that we ought to observe the first day of the week as the christian sabbath, and yet nearly all who profess to receive the Bible as a revelation from God, agree that his will with regard to this point is taught with sufficient clearness to render the observance of that day obligatory on all mankind. Why should we be less willing to abide by the same method of ascertaining his will in the former case than in the latter? The question with us ought to be, what are the *teachings* of God's word? without presuming to prescribe to him in what terms he shall communicate his will. It was for him alone and not for us to de-

cide the form and manner of revealing the doctrines and duties recorded in the sacred scriptures; it is ours to study reverently and diligently what his Spirit has indited, and by whatever method those doctrines and duties are found to be taught, whether in direct positive language, or by plain, necessary inference, we are bound to receive them. To feel and act otherwise is as unreasonable as the conduct of Thomas, who declared that he would not be convinced unless he could see with his own eyes the print of the nails in his Savior's hands and thrust his hand into his side. Fair and legitimate inference is as valid and conclusive in its teachings, and hence as obligatory upon us as any other mode of instruction. But this is only one aspect of the subject. Though we claim that inferential evidence is sufficient to establish this or any other article of faith or practice, yet as our Baptist brethren call for a positive command, we are willing to meet them on their own ground, as to the foundation principle on which the ordinance of infant baptism rests. In favor of the doctrine of infant church membership, we have a thus saith the Lord; we can point to the chapter and verse; and until they can adduce some other passage of scripture affording either positive or clear inferential proof that this kind of membership has been abolished, they must not think it strange if we adhere to the doctrine, attach importance to it, and insist upon having it carried out in practice, by that sacramental sign or seal of membership which Christ instituted for the church under

the gospel dispensation. We proceed to adduce,

I. Evidence in favor of infant baptism from the identity of the old and new testament church, and the acknowledged membership of infants in the former.

We prove the identity of the church under the old and new testament dispensation,

1st. From the fact that the Scriptures uniformly speak of the church in the singular number, except when referring to particular local organizations; and when mention is made of those local churches it is in such language as distinctly conveys the idea that they are different parts of "one body, the church." The same is true with regard to successive periods of time. Though the word church does not occur we believe in the English version of the Old Testament, it is found in the New where the Old Testament church is referred to, and without the slightest intimation that a different ecclesiastical body was meant from that of which the Apostles and primitive Christians were themselves members. Thus the Pentecostal church "to which the Lord added daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2: 47) was a continuation of the same body which is called (Acts 7: 38) "the church in the wilderness."

2d. From the nature and perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant under which the Old Testament church was constituted.—See Gen. 17: 7–10. This covenant was called by God an everlasting covenant; was designed to have its chief fulfilment in gospel times and was essentially the same in its character as that which binds together professing

Christians now. It was moreover neither abrogated by the law of Moses nor by the Gospel dispensation, and consequently is in force at the present day.

We do not maintain that God had no church in the world prior to the covenant made with Abraham,* but only that that covenant bound together the faithful few who had been called out to separate themselves from an idolatrous world by firmer and more sacred ties ; and brought them and their households into a new and more solemn ecclesiastical relation than had ever existed before ; which arrangement was designed to be permanent and to connect the ancient with the Christian church in a way that had never been done by any previous transaction. In accordance with this statement we find Peter (Acts 3: 13-25-26) and Stephen (Acts 7: 2-8) commencing their recital of the former history of God's people with the name of Abraham, and connecting it and also the covenant above referred to with the advent of the Mesiah, and with those extraordinary events which were occurring on and after the day of Pentecost.

The Abrahamic covenant was a bond not of civil or national but ecclesiastical union. This is rendered certain by the fact that for several hundred years after it was made, the seed of Abraham did not exist as a nation. It was just such a bond as unites together the members of the visible church under the Christian dispensation. Its essence con-

* We suppose it commenced in the family of Adam.

**ABRAHAM ENTERING INTO COVENANT
WITH GOD.**



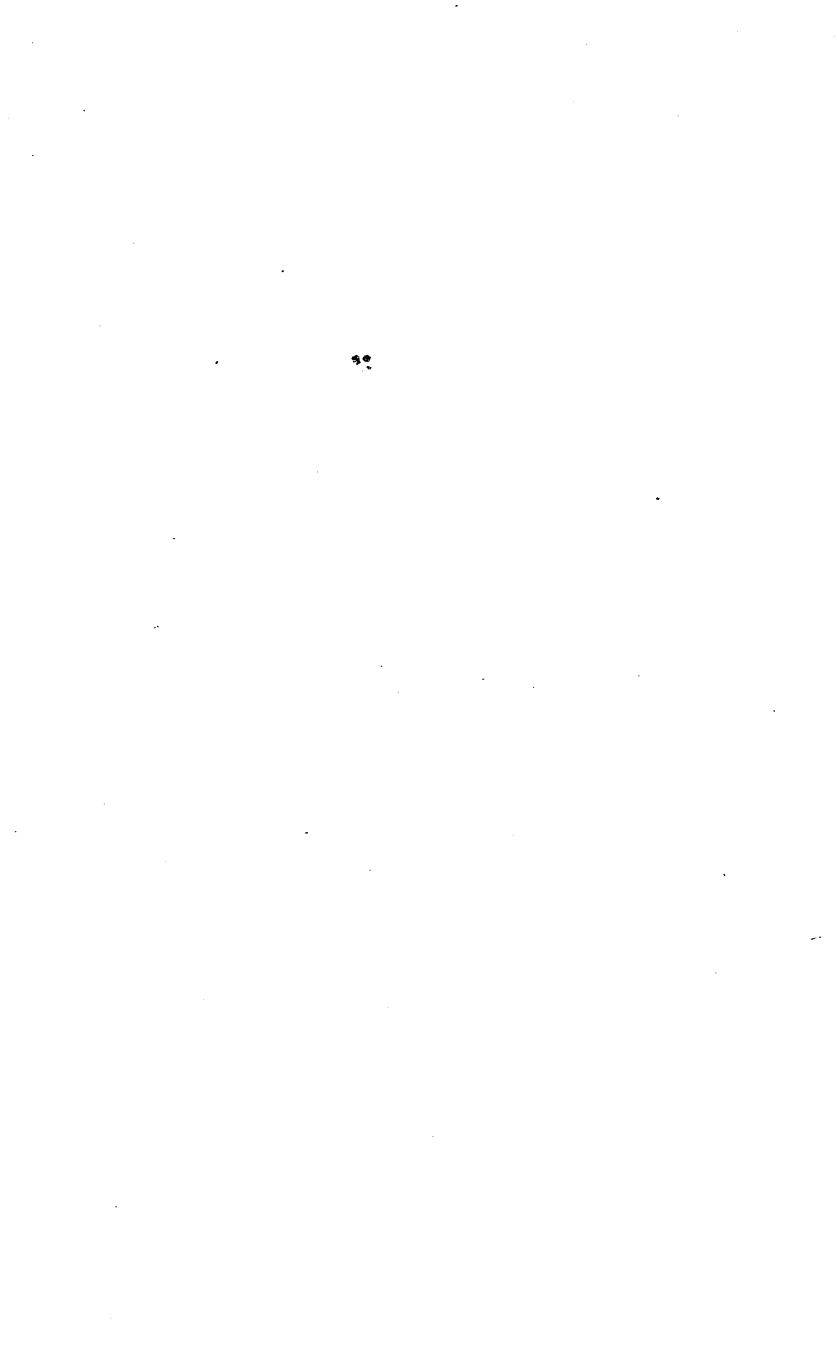
Gen. 17: 1-10.

sisted in requiring of all adults who came under it a profession of the true faith, with a gracious and invaluable promise on the part of God corresponding with this their profession; which two things form the substance of what is required and promised in the New Testament church. "And he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, *a seal of the righteousness of the faith* which he had yet being uncircumcised." Rom. 4: 11. Here was Abraham's profession of faith, corresponding with which was God's promise "to be a God to him and his seed after him." Gen. 17: 7. Take now an example from the New Testament. "See here is water," said the Eunuch to Philip, "what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, *If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest.*" Acts 8: 36-37. Here baptism is manifestly the seal of the same faith which was sealed by circumcision in the case of Abraham. We find also in the New Testament the same promise as that which was made to the father of the faithful. "This is the covenant that I will make,"—saith the Lord—"I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people." Heb. 8: 10. This language is precisely the same as that used in the Abrahamic covenant, and is intended to carry out its provisions; that covenant having been designed to secure the perpetuity of the church either among the Jews or Gentiles, or both together, till the end of time.

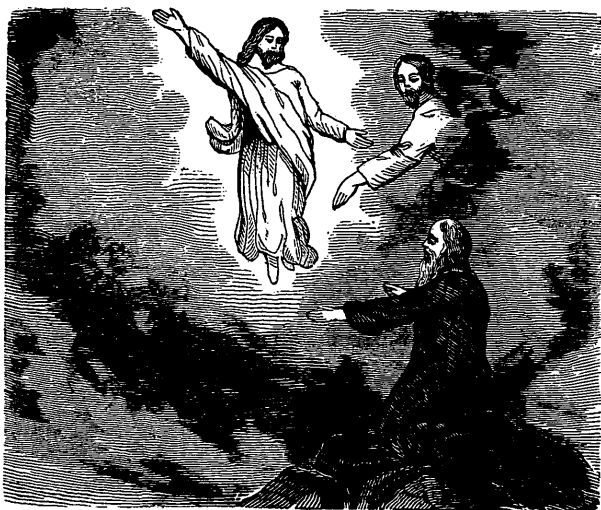
That the Abrahamic covenant was a distinct covenant from that made at Sinai of which Moses was the mediator, and was not affected either by the giv-

ing or the abrogation of the latter, is evident from the fact that the gospel covenant mentioned in the text just quoted (Heb. 8: 10) is contrasted with the Sinai or national covenant (see verse 9th) and not with the covenant made with Abraham; concerning which Paul says (Gal. 3: 17) "that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, *the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul* that it should make the promise of none effect." The national or Sinai covenant with which were connected their priesthood, and their numerous ceremonial observances, was temporary, to be done away when the New Testament dispensation should be introduced; but the Abrahamic covenant was declared at the time of its being made to be "*everlasting*;" it possessed in its very nature the elements of permanency and could not be abrogated by the shadowy and evanescent ritual of Moses.

Since then the ceremonial law did not affect it so as to make the two stand or fall together; neither was it annulled by the gospel. If, as we have seen, it so resembled the gospel as to be essentially the same with it in its requirements and promises, how could the one have been annulled by the other? We might say that the one succeeded the other, but what would this amount to? It would be like declaring that two men entered into covenant many years ago and that they have now made a new one which is essentially the same as the former. Who would not say in such a case that the latter is in reality the former covenant re-enacted? Precisely



ABRAHAM REJOICING TO SEE CHRIST'S
DAY.



John 8: 56.

of this kind is the relation between the New Testament covenant and that made with Abraham. "Ye are," said Peter (Acts 3: 25-26,) "the children of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, 'And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you,' &c. In the passage just quoted from Galatians that covenant is said to have been "confirmed of God *in Christ*;" in this we are told that God's "Son Jesus" in whom it was confirmed was sent to the children of the covenant to carry into effect its main provisions, viz: "to bless them, in turning away every one from his iniquities." How was this done except by those redeeming and saving mercies which are contained in the Gospel? The gospel dispensation then is merely the carrying forward to its completion the great and ultimate design of the Abrahamic covenant. Accordingly Paul says (Gal. 3: 8-9) that "the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, *preached before the gospel* unto Abraham, saying 'In thee shall all nations be blessed.' So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Again, (verse 29,) "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." This explains and illustrates those words of Christ, (John 8: 56,) "Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad."

3d. If farther proof is demanded, we find it in the fact that when Christ disowned the Jews as a peo-

ple and excommunicated them from their church privileges because they rejected him, he did not tell them that he would form another and a different church, but that the Gentiles would be introduced into the same kingdom from which they [the Jews] should be excluded. "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Mat. 21: 43. In like manner Paul (Rom. 11th chap.) teaches with great clearness under the figure of an olive tree that the natural branches [the Jews] were broken off and branches wild by nature [the Gentiles] were grafted into the same olive tree [i. e. the same church] from which the former had been excinded. "*Some* of the branches he says were broken off." Of course some were not broken off. Those Jews who believed in Christ retained their standing in the church and the believing Gentiles were incorporated with them,—"*grafted in among them*, to partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree;" (verse 17,) which with reference to the Jews is called (verse 24) "*their own olive tree*;" i. e. the church of which their ancestors from Abraham to Christ had been the favored members. Into this same church he also says that those unbelieving Jews who were now under the sentence of excommunication shall be restored, when they repent of their wickedness and embrace their long rejected Messiah. "And they also, (verse 23) if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again." What can be plainer than this? To my own mind the identity of the Old

and New Testament church is here taught with the clearness of a sunbeam.

The argument derived from this identity of the church in favor of infant baptism may now be very soon disposed of. It is admitted by all that infant membership was universally recognized in the Old Testament church, and that circumcision which was the appointed sign and seal of membership was strictly enjoined, with a severe penalty annexed in case of neglect. It must then be shown that either Christ or his Apostles have excluded infants from the church, which cannot be done, or it follows as a necessary consequence, that they are as truly members now as they were in the time of Abraham and Moses, and that being such, they are entitled to be so recognized, by the administration of baptism, which is the acknowledged initiatory ordinance of admission into the church under the Christian dispensation.

II. Evidence in favor of infant baptism from Christ's treatment of little children.

The record of what we refer to is found in Mat. 19: 14, Mark 10: 14, and Luke 18:15-16. In Matthew it reads, "Then were brought unto him little children that he should put his hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them." Mark adds, "and blessed them." Before stating the argument it is necessary to observe that this application to Christ

for his benediction upon these children was not made by them but by others in their behalf. They "were brought." It is not said how old they were, but Mark calls them "young children" and Luke "infants," which shows that they were small. Mark also says that Christ "took them up in his arms," which is a farther indication of their early age. It might appear from Matthew that they were old enough to be rebuked; "the disciples rebuked them." By the word *them* however he does not mean the children, but those who brought them. In Mark it is fully expressed: "His disciples rebuked those that brought them." It is clear therefore that they were quite young: and that they were presented to Christ not by themselves but by their parents, guardians or other friends.

Concerning these little children Christ declared, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven;" in Mark and Luke the reading is "the kingdom of God;" by which we understand him to mean that the christian church which was soon to be commenced, and in which his disciples then present would officiate as ministers, would be composed in part of young children; and the argument is that as they are members of his church, they are entitled to the ordinance of baptism, which is the visible sign and seal of membership prescribed by him. One thing only needs to be settled. If this interpretation of Christ's words, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," be the true one, then the argument is conclusive. Is this the sense of the phrase? We answer in the affirmative, because

1. The christian or gospel dispensation of the church is predicted in the Old Testament under the name of a kingdom. See Dan. 2: 44. "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom," &c. This is without doubt a prophecy of the erection of Christ's kingdom or church on earth at the beginning of the gospel dispensation, as distinguished from the dispensation of the church under the Old Testament.

2. Our blessed Lord speaking of the Old Testament church denominates it "the kingdom of God," and by what he says in connexion with it he also virtually applies the same name to the New Testament church. "Therefore say I unto you [unbelieving Jews] *the kingdom of God* [your church privileges] shall be taken from you and given to a nation [believing Gentiles] bringing forth the fruits thereof." Of course the appellation kingdom of God which the Jewish church formerly enjoyed, was transferred to believing Gentiles along with its privileges. The Jewish church which was designated by this honorable distinction and other similar ones, such as "a kingdom of priests," &c., would be disinherited and these names would be appropriated to the christian church. See 1 Ret. 2; 9-10. Compare now this appellation, "kingdom of God," which was given by Christ to his church, with what he said concerning little children: "Of such is the kingdom of God." See Mark 10: 14, and Luke 18: 16. Is it not manifest that he refers in both cases to the same religious community.

3. John the Baptist and soon afterwards Christ himself commenced their public ministry by the announcement, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." See Mat. 3: 2, and 4: 17. By this kingdom it is very obvious they meant the spiritual reign of the Messiah on earth; or which is the same thing, a new dispensation of the visible church, which was about to be introduced under the ministry of Christ and his Apostles. Let this again be collated with the language employed by Christ concerning little children: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Mat. 19: 14. Is it in the smallest degree probable that Christ alludes in these two examples to different things? If not then it follows that in that kingdom of heaven, the gospel church, which he said in his preaching was then at hand, little children would be recognized as members.

May not the reason why Christ was displeased with his disciples for rebuking those who brought to him these children, have been, because they evinced by their conduct that they entertained erroneous and unworthy views concerning the design of his mission into our world; regarding him as a temporal king to whom the office of blessing the people did not belong. Mark says, "he was much displeased." The object in bringing them to him was to obtain his blessing—"that he should put his hands on them and pray." Mat. 19: 13. The disciples appear to have thought that their Master ought not to be troubled with applications of this kind, because being a civil ruler and not a priest, matters of a different

character would require his attention, and because there were among them priests and levites, a part of whose official duty was to bless the people. See Deut. 10: 8, and 21: 4; also Num. 6: 22-27. Christ's reply to them and his treatment of the children, were adapted to correct their mistake. He in effect told them that his errand on earth was not to administer civil government, but to establish his church, which was an object immeasurably greater; and that his official work being sacred and not civil, it was highly proper for the people to come to him with their children and receive his benediction. Accordingly "he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Mark 10: 16. This act of benediction was under the circumstances and taken in connexion with the reason assigned—"for of such is the kingdom of heaven,"—a distinct recognition of their church membership. Their right to the privilege of receiving his blessing is predicated upon their relation to his kingdom: "for [because] of such is the kingdom of heaven." In the Jewish church the official benediction pronounced by the high-priest was upon the whole congregation of Israel, old and young, parents and children: it was a public act, all classes of persons being present; and hence the reason assigned for blessing these infants was a virtual admission that if little children were not to sustain the same relation to the church under the gospel dispensation which they had done under the old; in other words, if it were his purpose to exclude them from "the congregation

of Israel," [i. e. from the christian church,] they would not be entitled to his benediction in the sense here intended; and that those who brought them to him for this purpose were justly rebuked by his disciples. Our Savior's blessing them was therefore under the circumstances a distinct acknowledgment of their church membership.

But by the phrase "kingdom of heaven" some understand the kingdom of glory. Though for the reasons above given we do not adopt this opinion, yet on the supposition that this is the true interpretation, it furnishes a strong argument for infant church membership. If it teaches infant salvation, which is a doctrine we fully believe, would it not be incredible that Christ should admit a class of persons into his kingdom of glory to whom he refuses a name and a place among his people on earth? We are thus brought to the same result as before. Either infant church members are such, and are to continue such without baptism, or they are to be baptized as the initiatory, visible seal of their membership. Which of these alternatives is the more probable? Let the analogy furnished by the history of the old testament church, in which the infant Savior himself condescended to receive the appointed seal of membership, furnish an answer. See Luke 2: 21. Why do not those who are so strenuous in pleading Christ's example as an argument for going into the water, see the propriety and force of his example while an infant? After he was grown up did he ever rebuke his parents for subjecting him to the rite of circum-





cision? or intimated that they had performed a useless and unnecessary act?

III. A consideration of our Savior's last commission to his Apostles, compared with the manner in which they taught and practiced under it.

Those who deny the scriptural authority for baptizing infants, maintain that they are excluded by the Apostolic commission, which they say requires faith in order to baptism; and since infants cannot believe they must not be baptized. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark 16: 16.

If these words admit of no other interpretation than the one here assumed, viz: that faith is essential *in all cases without exception*, in order to entitle a person to receive baptism, the above inference is valid, and the practice of infant baptism must be given up as unauthorized by our Savior. But do they teach that faith is essential to baptism *in all cases? infants as well as adults?* In order to make the argument good, the premises must be as broad as the conclusion. But as nothing is said in the commission about infants; by what rule of reasoning can the proposition be made to extend to them? All which is taught by the passage is that unconverted adults must not be baptized before they believe. The utmost that can be inferred concerning infants is that because they are not mentioned, therefore this commission cannot be appealed to in favor of infant baptism. But is not the same inference as applicable to both sides of the question as it is to

one? If Christ's omission to say anything about infants prevents the use of it as a proof text in *favor* of infant baptism, it also prevents its use for the same reason as a proof text *against* the baptism of infants. Thus far therefore both parties stand on a level. We must then resort to the circumstances of the case; and if it can be shown that these were of such a character that the omission of infants when he sent out the Apostles to preach and baptize, can be accounted for in no other way than by supposing he designed to exclude them from the ordinance of baptism, this again will settle the question against the practice. But can this be shown? On the contrary that omission can be accounted for, not only without assuming that Christ intended to exclude infants from this ordinance, but the inference from it is decidedly the other way, viz: that they were not mentioned because he designed to make no change in their former relation to the church, and hence there was no necessity of giving any particular directions on the subject.

1. The Apostles were by birth and education Jews, and had always been accustomed to the rite of infant circumcision, and they attached to it great importance.

2. They were familiar with the baptism of proselytes from the Gentiles, who as is well authenticated by ancient history were received into the Jewish church by circumcision and baptism—the males both parents and children being circumcised and baptized and the females baptized. The commis-

sion to preach and baptize (as its language clearly shows) had particular reference to the Gentiles. They needed no special instructions to preach to the Jews. This they were commissioned to do at the commencement of Christ's public ministry. But in that first commission he told them not to go in the way of the Gentiles, "but only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Now he said: "Go teach all nations, baptizing them," &c. Mat. 18: 19-20. The word teach, in our English version, occurs twice in this passage. "Go teach all nations," &c.; "teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you." But in the Greek they are not the same words. In the second instance it signifies to teach in the common acceptation of the term, viz: to instruct; but in the first it would be more accurately translated by the term disciple: "Go make disciples of all nations;" which conveys a sense analogous to proselyte: "Go make proselytes of them, baptizing them," &c.—a direction which differed in no important respect from what they had often seen carried into practice, except that now they were to be made proselytes not to Judaism but Christianity; and they were not as formerly to wait for the Gentiles to come and knock at their door for admittance, but go out and offer them the blessings of the gospel.

3. Though the Gentiles were especially intended in this commission, the Jews were not to be overlooked. They were required to "preach in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." And the recollection was still fresh in their minds, that

Christ was much displeased with them for rebuking some of their Jewish brethren because they brought to him little children to receive his benediction, and that he had said concerning them "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

From these circumstances it appears to me to be a fair conclusion that if Christ had designed not to have his Apostles baptize infants, he would have expressly excepted them in the commission; and on the other hand, that if he expected them to do it, he would say nothing particularly on the subject; but merely authorize and require them, as he has done, in general terms, to extend to all the world those precious privileges which had hitherto been enjoyed for the most part by the Jewish nation alone.

We will now inquire how the Apostles proceeded to teach and act under their commission. As to their teaching, there are two instances on record which bear on this point. One is the discourse of Peter to a Jewish audience on the day of Pentecost, and the other an epistle of Paul to a church of believing Gentiles. Peter's language was "Repent and be baptized," &c., "for the promise is unto you and to your *children*, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2: 38-39.

By the *promise* immediate reference was had to the prophecy of Joel quoted by him at the commencement of his discourse (v. 16-17;) in which was predicted the effusion of the Holy Spirit. But there was a farther reference to the promise contained in

the Abrahamic covenant. This we think is proved from the fact that in his next discourse (Acts 3: 25, 26) he expressly connects with that covenant the extraordinary events which were then transpiring. "Ye are the children of the prophets and of *the covenant* which God made with our fathers, *saying unto Abraham*; 'And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.' Unto you first God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you," &c. It is also proved from the reference made to that covenant by Paul, who mentions the specific blessing which was enjoyed at the Pentecost, viz: the Spirit as flowing from it: "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive *the promise of the Spirit* through faith. Gal. 3: 14.

This being settled we find no difficulty in understanding who were meant by "*children*." The promise to Abraham is found first in Gen. 12th chapter; it was repeated substantially in chapter 15th, and renewed again with the seal of circumcision in chapter 17th. In the 12th chapter no mention is made of a covenant. In the 15th it is said God made a covenant with Abraham; but the words quoted by Peter are not found in that chapter. By comparing Acts 3: 25, with Gen. 12: 3, and 17: 7, it will be seen that the quotation in Peter's second sermon is taken partly from both chapters, but that a particular reference was had to the 17th. This appears from the fact that the words are quoted as forming a part of a "*covenant*," of which (as we have

said) no mention is made in the 12th chapter; and that the word "*seed*" is introduced by him, which is also wanting in chapter 12th. Both of these terms are contained in the 17th chapter, which shows that the Apostle designed to direct the minds of his hearers especially to that. Now compare the words "the promise is unto you and to your *children*," (Acts 2: 38-39) with that recorded in Gen. 17: 7, which furnishes a key to the interpretation of Peter's language: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy *seed* after thee," &c., "to be a God unto thee and thy *seed* after thee." Whatever is meant by "*seed*" in the one case, is to be understood by "*children*" in the other. We do not maintain that it signifies in either, little children exclusively, or children of any age, as distinguished from adults. But the connexion in which the word *seed* stands in Genesis clearly shows that children of all ages down to the infant of eight days old were included. And if so would not Peter be understood by his Jewish hearers as using the word *children* in the same sense? It was as though he had said "Repent" and by the ordinance of baptism incorporate yourselves with the disciples of Christ; in doing which your church privileges will not be abridged, for the promise made to Abraham, "to be a God unto him and to his seed after him," is to be carried out under the christian dispensation—"the promise is unto you and to your *children*, and to them that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call." Some interpret these last words of

those Jews who were not present at that scene; but it appears to me to accord better with the import of the phrase "afar off" as found elsewhere to refer it to the Gentiles, who are described by Paul as "afar off;" (Eph. 2: 13-17,) and this sense is apposite to our present purpose. Not only were Abraham's natural seed according to that covenant to be blessed through the Messiah, but "all the families of the earth;" which last promise Peter refers to in these words; teaching thereby that "as many as the Lord our God should call," to whatever nation they might belong, would become partakers equally with the believing Jews, of the privileges contained in that covenant. As the promise belonged to the former and their children so also to the latter and their children. "Now we, brethren, [believing Gentiles] as Isaac was are the children of promise." Gal. 4: 28.

The other case is recorded in 1 Cor. 7: 14. "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your *children* unclean, but now are they holy." It appears from the context that the design of this passage was to solve an important practical difficulty. It would often happen that the husband would be converted from paganism to christianity while the wife remained a heathen; or the wife be converted while the husband continued an idolator. What course ought the believing party to pursue towards the unbelieving? Must the former separate from the latter? or would it be consistent with a profession of christianity for them to remain togeth-

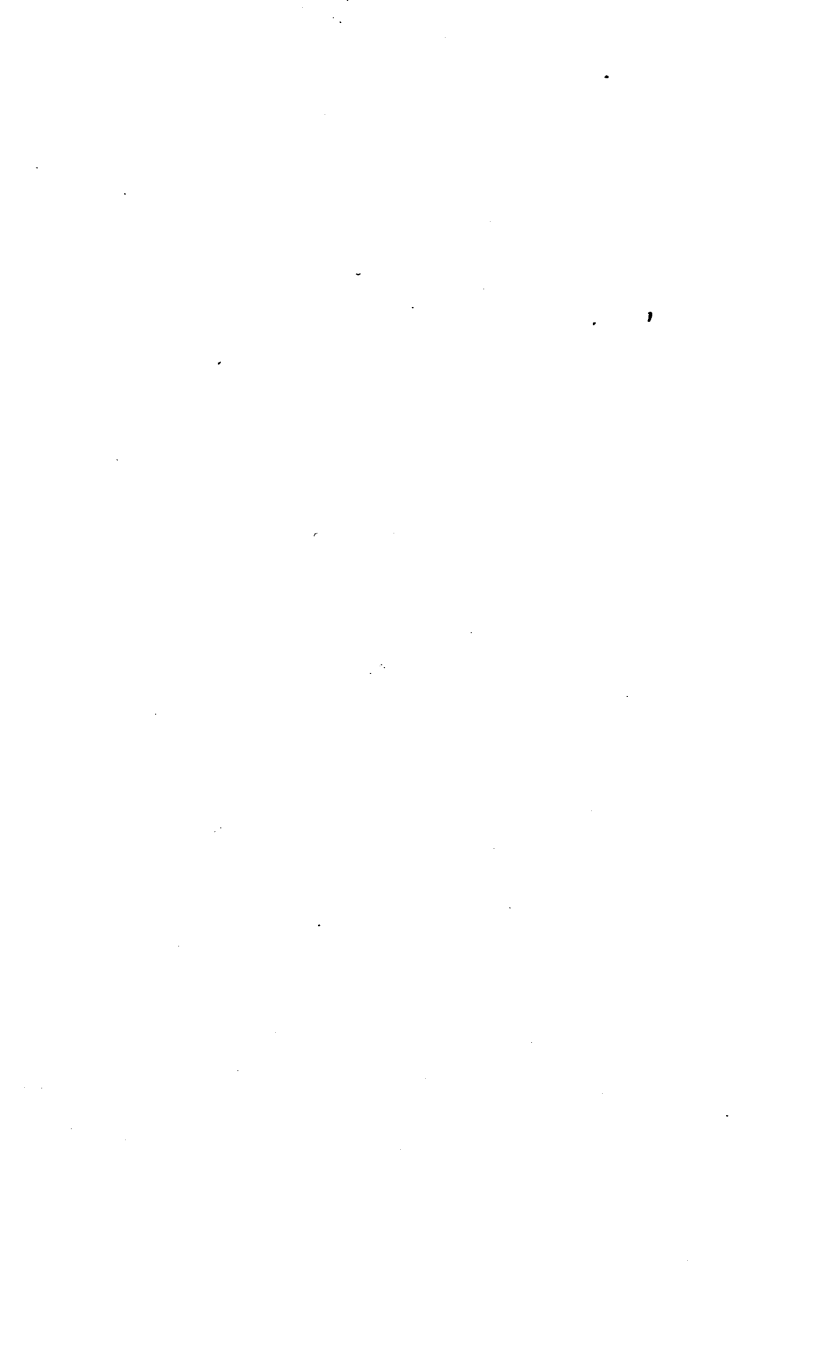
er? and if so what relation would their children sustain to the christian church? The Apostle replied that if the unbeliever choose to depart, let him depart; but that the believing party must not be the first to propose it. On the contrary, if the pagan husband or wife was willing to remain with his christian partner, the latter must remain; "for the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband:" i. e. the heathen husband or wife is so far separated from paganism by the christian profession of the other, that the latter could enjoy the privilege of dedicating their *children* to God. "Else were your children *unclean*"; i. e. unfit to be devoted to God, because their parents were idolaters, and therefore wholly disqualified to offer them. "But now are they *holy*"; i. e. they are proper persons to be dedicated to Jehovah; because one of their parents being a christian, some security would be given for the training up of their children in the christian faith. Accordingly their household must be regarded and treated as a christian family—it being implied of course that the heathen party if he chose to continue with the converted one, must consent to this change in the ecclesiastical relation of their children. Thus the believing parent would feel that one serious difficulty to his continuing to live with a heathen partner was removed—a difficulty which would be insuperable provided their children as was the case among the heathen, were to be devoted from their birth to some idol.

The above interpretation of the terms *unclean* and *holy*, is abundantly sanctioned by the word of God. They occur often in the ceremonial law and occasionally in other parts of the scripture. As examples we refer the reader to Gen. 7, 2, and 8, 20: Ex. 28, 38: Lev. 10, 16, and 27, 30: Num. 18, 17. From a perusal of those texts it will be evident that the term *unclean*, is used with reference to what was not allowed to be offered in sacrifice to God, and *holy*, with reference to what might be offered. This sense of the words was familiar to the Apostle; it was their common meaning in the Old Testament, and hence there can be no reasonable doubt that he so used them in this passage. But how were persons accustomed in Paul's time, to be devoted to God? They were baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And if (as he taught the Corinthians) the *children* of such as thus devoted themselves, were also "*holy*," i. e. were proper persons to be devoted to him, what else could be meant than that they likewise should receive the same ordinance, which was the Divinely instituted sign of this dedication.

We should not perhaps leave wholly unnoticed a different interpretation given by some to the words "*unclean*" and "*holy*." By *unclean* they understand illegitimate, and by *holy*, legitimate. "Else were your children *unclean*," [illegitimate] "but now are they *holy*," [legitimate]. If this is the import of the words, it follows that a profession of piety in one of the parents is necessary in order to make their mar-

riage lawful, and their offspring legitimate—a conclusion which needs only to be mentioned in order to show that an exposition which leads to it as a necessary consequence, is not entitled to serious consideration.

In noticing the *practice* of the Apostles, we will adduce two examples which correspond to the two cases of teaching just considered, viz: one among the Jews, the other among the Gentiles. The former is the baptism of Lydia and her household, Acts 16: 13–16. If, as is probable, Lydia was not a Jewess by birth she was a proselyte to the Jewish religion,—and was engaged in worship with a Jewish congregation at the time of her conversion to the christian faith. She was in a place of prayer (v. 13) on the sabbath day; and she worshipped God (v. 16) which is a description of the Jewish and not of Pagan religion. She was therefore well acquainted with the Jewish rites and with their mode of receiving proselytes into the church. What Peter said on the day of Pentecost—"the promise is unto you and to your children," she had often seen exemplified in the baptism of households, including parents and their children, when the former became proselytes to the Jewish religion. Luke was also familiar with the same practice; and hence when her heart was opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul, and she embraced the Lord Jesus Christ as her Saviour, the record of her reception into the christian church, was just such as would naturally have been made, if Peter or Paul had preached to her before



LYDIA AND HER HOUSEHOLD BAPTIZED.



Acts 16: 13-15.

Christ's advent, while she was yet a heathen, and had admitted her into the Jewish church. "She was baptized and her household." Suppose the design of the record had been to give the history of her reception into the Jewish church, as a convert from paganism; could there be any doubt as to its import? The term household is equivalent to family; and the idea necessarily conveyed would have been, that she having been converted and baptized, her family received this ordinance upon her faith. This was the method invariably employed at that time in admitting Gentile proselytes into the Jewish church. It is therefore a probable inference that the same thing was done in receiving her into the christian church; and this probability is greatly strengthened if not rendered entirely certain, by her own language addressed to Paul and Luke immediately afterwards. "And when she was baptized and her household, she besought us, saying, if ye have judged *me* to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house," &c.—Mark, she urges her request not on the ground of the faith of her household, but of her own.

The other case is recorded in the same chapter, and describes the conversion of a Gentile, a jailor at Phillippi; of whom it is said that he "was baptized, he and all his." Acts 16: 33. It is not denied by any so far as we know, that by "all his," we are to understand all his family or household. The only question in dispute is whether they were all believers? or whether *he only* believed? In the former case each would be baptized on his own faith; in the lat-

ter, on the faith of the jailor, who as the head of his family brought the members thereof by baptism under the bond of God's covenant with his people. The words "they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house," show that some of his family and perhaps all of them were old enough to receive religious instruction; and this would render it probable, if nothing else were said on the subject, that they embraced Christ and were baptized on their own faith. But this is not all that is said, and hence this alone cannot settle the question. Children may and often do in some churches, receive christian baptism on their parents' faith, who are of sufficient age to receive it on their own, provided they possessed the requisite qualifications. But not possessing those qualifications, they are presented to God in this ordinance by their parents, when the latter are converted to Christ and connect themselves with his church. This we believe was done by the jailor. One of our reasons for this opinion is found in the answer of Paul and Silas to the question "what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and *thy house*." Thy house, i. e. thy family shall be saved. This surely cannot mean that if *he* believed, *they* would be saved solely on the ground of *his* faith, *without exercising faith themselves*. Such a sentiment does not accord with other parts of Scripture. And yet their salvation is manifestly connected in some way with his faith. Again, it cannot mean that they would be saved, provided

they should exercise faith. Though this would be true, it is a truism which in this connexion, is devoid of force. If they should believe in Christ, they would be saved, whether the jailor believed in him or not. But as we said before, the promise as here made, has a special relation to the faith of the jailor. In what sense then would his family be saved as the result of his faith in the Redeemer? Only one answer, so far as we can perceive, can be consistently given to this question. They would be saved in the sense of those words of Christ concerning Zaccheus, Luke 19: 9—"this day is salvation come to this house." Zaccheus though a Jew, had by his infamous conduct, forfeited his church privileges, and was counted as a heathen. His family were of course in the same condemnation. But Christ now restored him to his former covenant relation and required him to be regarded and treated as "a son of Abraham." His family must also be owned as one of the families of Israel. The channels of saving mercy which their father by his former conduct had closed against them, Christ now opened for their benefit. The father's restoration to the Divine favor, encircled his "house," with the rainbow of God's covenant. It brought the means of grace and salvation to his outcast "publican" family. So it was with the "house" of the jailor. His faith in Christ so changed the relation of his family with regard to religion, that instead of the streams of pagan pollution which had before defiled their hearts, they were now blessed with those pure waters of life

which are enjoyed by christian families through the ordinances of the church. If this is what Paul and Silas meant by the jailor's "house" being saved, it amounts to a declaration that his family would through his faith be numbered among Christ's visible people, and hence that they would be entitled to christian baptism as the sign or token of their new relation.

But we have another and stronger reason for our opinion. It is founded on v. 34, where it is said that the jailor "rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." The participle "believing" it is obvious, agrees with jailor. In the Greek, it is in the singular number, and can agree with nothing else. The jailor believed in God. Thus far there can be no doubt. But Luke adds to this phrase, (as it stands in the English) "with all his house." We say he *adds* this phrase to the word "*believing*," as though it belonged to that; but in the Greek the phrase "with all his house" stands before believing, and is connected grammatically with "rejoiced." "He rejoiced with all his house, believing [i. e. he believing] in God." Our translators changed the order of the words it is probable, because in English, the participle believing is either singular or plural, and hence it would be doubtful if placed in the order of the original, whether it referred to the jailor or to his house or to both; and hence they placed it before the phrase, "with all his house," so as to avoid this obscurity, and show what is very clear in the Greek, that the jailor is referred to in the word believing,

and not his family. But in avoiding one obscurity, they created another. As it now stands the English reader is still liable to connect the phrase "with all his house," with "believing," and thus receive the erroneous impression that not only the jailor but all his house believed in God ; which is not said at all, but the contrary is distinctly taught. He alone and not they, "believed in God." Gr. "He rejoiced with all his house, [himself] believing in God." This places the question, according to my judgment, beyond reasonable doubt.

Connect now our previous remarks with reference to the jailor's *house being saved*, with what is here affirmed concerning his *rejoicing with all his house*, and the whole is satisfactorily explained. The joy is predicated chiefly of *him* ; but as it seems to be implied that his family participated with him in his joy, this circumstance creates no difficulty, but is just what we should expect. Some of them as we have seen, if not all were old enough to be instructed, and would feel happy at seeing their once heathen but now christian father rejoicing in hope of future glory.

There is one other case of household baptism recorded in the New Testament, but as no circumstance is mentioned in connection with it, which throws any additional light on the subject, we shall not give it a particular consideration. See 1 Cor. 1: 16. Is it asked why no more examples are found provided they were common in those days ? We might as well inquire why no more frequent mention

is made of the sabbath and public worship? which occurred upwards of fifty times every year, and yet but few allusions, comparatively speaking, are made to either, in the New Testament. If a single case of household baptism can be adduced it is sufficient to establish the doctrine. One clear Apostolic example outweighs all the presumptive, negative proof which can be brought against it. But the two cases which have been adduced, are not opposed either by contrary principles or conflicting facts. They illustrate and confirm principles which the sacred writers frequently taught on this subject, and they are corroborated by historical circumstances recorded in the bible and in other ancient writings. The most important of those principles we have considered in the preceding pages. Some of the facts to which we allude we shall now proceed to notice.

IV. Evidence in favor of infant baptism from the history of proselyte baptism among the Jews, compared with its early history in the christian church.

We have alluded several times to the practice among the Jews of baptizing proselytes from the Gentiles. No fact is better attested by Jewish writers than this. At what time it was introduced is not so clear. But we have undoubted proof from the scriptures that it was practiced before the christian era, and some probable evidence is also furnished as to its origin.

1. The induction of the priests and levites into their official stations was performed in part by washing them with water. Ex. 40: 30-32, and Num. 8:

7. The people also in their solemn approaches to God were accustomed to bathe or sprinkle themselves with water and to wash their garments as a preparation for those solemn acts. Num. 19: 19, 20. To these examples we may add that the whole congregation of Israel were initiated into the Mosaic ritual by passing "under the cloud and through the sea:" which is called by Paul their being "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." It appears therefore that from an early period of their history they were familiar with the use of water in their religious ceremonies and solemnities. And it continued to be so in later times as may be inferred from the fact that the allusions which were made to water in the figurative language of the prophets well accord with this general usage, and possess much less force and beauty on the supposition that no such practice existed. See Isa. 44, 3, Ez. 36, 25.

2. The baptism of John was not regarded by the people as a novelty. When they asked him (John 1, 25) "why baptizest thou then?" their inquiry did not imply the introduction of a new rite, but only a doubt as to his authority to administer it.

3. The dispute which arose between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying, (John 3: 23, 25, 26) was apparently a controversy about the comparative claims of John and Christ to make proselytes.

4. The Pharisees evidently regarded the baptism both of Christ and John the Baptist, as a mode of making proselytes. John 4, 1.

5. When Peter on the day of Pentecost, addressed the multitudes who were assembled at Jerusalem out of every nation under heaven, saying "repent and be baptized;" they were not taken by surprise as though he was introducing a new ordinance. They appeared to be acquainted with its existence and to understand that it was connected with repentance.

6. Josephus the Jewish historian speaking of the baptism of John the Baptist (*Antiq.* 18, 5, 2,) alludes to it in such language as to show that he did not regard John as its author, but as practicing what was in use before.

7. Dr. Wall in his history of Infant Baptism, quotes largely from the Jewish Talmud and from Maimonides a learned Jew and the great interpreter of the Jewish law, giving specific information as to the practice and opinions of the Jews on this subject. Some of these we will transcribe:

"When an ethnic [a Gentile] is willing to enter into the covenant, and gather himself under the wings of the majesty of God, and take upon him the yoke of the law, he must be circumcised, and baptized, and bring a sacrifice; or if it be a woman, be baptized and bring a sacrifice."

"A stranger that is circumcised and not baptized, or baptized and not circumcised, he is not a proselyte till he be both circumcised and baptized," &c.

"Even as they circumcise and baptize strangers; so do they circumcise and baptize servants that are received from heathens," &c.

"If with a proselyte his sons and daughters be made proselytes; that which is done by their father, [i. e. to proselyte them by circumcising and baptizing them] redounds to their good." Again

"They are wont to baptize such a proselyte in infancy upon the profession of the house of judgment (the court). For this is for his good." * * * *

"Any male child of such a proselyte, that was under the age of thirteen years and a day, and females that were under twelve years and a day, they baptized as infants at the request and by the assent of the father, or the authority of the court; because such an one was not yet the son of assent [i. e. not capable to give assent for himself] but the thing is for his good. If they were above that age they assented for themselves." Again

"An Israelite that takes a little heathen child, or that finds an heathen infant, and baptizes him for a proselyte; behold he is a proselyte." * * * *

"Behold, one finds an infant cast out, and baptizes him in the name of a servant. Do thou also circumcise him in the name of a servant. But if thou baptize him in the name of a freeman; do thou also circumcise him in the name of a freeman."

The origin of this practice is given in the same author, thus: "By three things did Israel enter into covenant, by circumcision, and baptism, and sacrifice." Circumcision was in Egypt, as it is written "No uncircumcised person shall eat thereof," i. e. of the Passover. (Ex. 12: 48.) Baptism as in the wilderness just before the giving of the law; as it is

written, sanctify them to-day and to-morrow and let them wash their clothes. Ex. 19: 10. And sacrifice, as it is said, "And he set young men of the children of Israel which offered burnt offerings," &c. Exod. 24; 5. And so in all ages when an ethnic [a Gentile] is willing to enter into covenant, &c.—"he must be circumcised and bring a sacrifice." Again

"Israel does not enter into covenant but by these three things, by circumcision, baptism, and peace-offering; and the proselytes in like manner." Again

"As you are, so shall the stranger be. Num. 15: 15. As you are, that is, as was done to your fathers. And what was done to them? Your fathers did not enter into covenant but by circumcision, and baptism and sprinkling of blood. So neither do proselytes enter into covenant but by circumcision, and baptism and sprinkling of blood."

Gregory Nazianzen who lived A. D. 360, says (as quoted by Dr. Wall) "Moses gave a baptism, but that was with water only. And before that they were baptized in the cloud and in the sea. But these were but a type (or figure) of ours; as Paul also understands it." 1 Cor. 10: 1, 2. Again

The learned Mr. Selden, with whom also agrees Dr. Hammond, "observes that the saying of St. Paul (1 Cor. 10: 1, 2,) All our fathers were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, would have been difficult for those to whom St. Paul wrote, to make any sense of; had it not been a thing well known at that time when the apostle wrote, that the Jews

looked upon themselves as having been entered into covenant by baptism; and that St. Paul spoke as alluding to that." See Wall's History of Infant Baptism, Vol. 1st.

The baptism of the Israelites unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, (which seems to have been designed for a type of this ordinance and was probably the origin of the idea which they had of it) included the whole congregation, old and young. So also the command "sanctify," "wash," &c., (Ex. 19: 10) which was interpreted by the Jewish rabbies, as referring to baptism, was to be performed by the people collectively and of course embraced children as well as parents. And growing out of one or both of those events, there arose the practice of baptizing proselytes from the heathen, together with their families; the number of which in process of time became so great, according to Josephus, (see Antiq. Book 13, Chap. 9 and 11,) that at the period of our Saviour's incarnation, infant baptism must have been as well known among the Jews, as it is now in America or Great Britain. Our argument from all this in favor of infant baptism as an ordinance in the christian church is the following:

1. It renders it probable that John the Baptist and Christ himself baptized infants as well as adults. It appears from John 1: 25, that the Jews expected that when the Messiah should come and introduce a new dispensation, this ordinance would be administered as an expression of their faith in the promised Redeemer. And from John 4: 1, and Acts 19: 4

we learn that Christ and John the Baptist did so administer it. The inference is highly probable that they baptized the same classes of persons, as had been accustomed to receive this ordinance when proselyted from the Gentiles, i. e. children as well as parents.*

2. It shows what interpretation the Apostles would put on the commission of their risen Saviour,

*We have gone no farther than to say it is *very probable* that they baptized infants. The only circumstance which renders this at all doubtful is that the christian dispensation was not yet commenced and therefore the ordinance as administered by them was not *initiatory* as in the case of Gentile proselytes—it being administered by them to Jews only, who with their children were already members of the Old Testament church. Yet as their ministry was designed to “prepare” the people for the reception of the Messiah, and as their baptism was a sign or pledge on the part of those who received it that they would embrace him as their Saviour; it is reasonable to conclude that they conformed to the usual practice of their ancestors when the latter at different times entered into covenant with God, viz: to act for their families as well as themselves; and if so, that after giving their pledge to embrace Christ, not only they but their children received the rite of baptism which was the sign or token of this pledge. If as our Baptist brethren maintain, John’s baptism was *christian* baptism, this argument which is only probable according to the preceding view, becomes *conclusive*. By making the ordinance as administered by him *initiatory*, the analogy between that and Gentile proselyte baptism is complete, and it is rendered quite certain that he baptized infants; and also that Christ and his disciples who were baptizing at the same time did so likewise. But we are disposed to place the argument on the former ground, though its strength is thereby somewhat diminished; because the Jewish ritual continued in full force till Christ’s death; and hence John’s ministry as well as Christ’s own ministry on earth belonged to the Old Testament dispensation. Their ministry it is true brought that dispensation to a close, but was still performed under it. The new commenced with the completion of Christ’s mediatorial work on earth and the descent of the Holy Spirit; which dispensation is accordingly called by Paul “the ministration of the Spirit.”

“Go teach all nations baptizing them,” &c. Being already familiar with the ordinance as administered to proselytes, they would unavoidably (without special instructions to the contrary) understand their commission, as authorizing and requiring them to baptize the children and servants of those households, the heads of which should be converted to Christ.

3. It proves when taken in connexion with facts recorded in the New Testament, that baptism occupies the same place in the christian church that circumcision had done before among the Jews ; or rather perhaps the same place that circumcision and baptism together, had done among Gentile proselytes. As Christ did not institute baptism as a new rite, but adopted an ordinance already in existence, and as this ordinance had always before this been connected with circumcision, it would be natural to infer that the two sustained an intimate relation to each other ; and that if the one was dropped and the other retained, the part retained would be as extensive in its application as it had been before the other part was laid aside. Circumcision was not continued under the christian dispensation for much the same reason that animal sacrifices were discontinued as a part of religious worship ; and that the lamb which had been used in celebrating the Passover, was not made a part of the sacrament of the Lord’s supper. Prayer and praise were employed by the pious under the Old Testament as well as the New ; with which under the Old they connected the offering of

sacrifices. This was laid aside after the death of Christ, as being inappropriate to the christian dispensation, while prayer and praise were retained as permanent acts of devotion. Bread and wine were used in the Passover as well as the lamb; but when our blessed Lord instituted the supper, he made no use of the lamb, because that would not be adapted to the ordinance, after the Lamb of God should be offered up once for all; but he retained the bread and wine as standing memorials of his death. In like manner circumcision was not included in our Saviour's commission to "teach and baptize," because it was unsuitable to perpetuate in the christian church a rite which could not be performed without the shedding of blood; and because water *alone* was a more appropriate emblem of the ministration of the Holy Spirit which was introduced when our Saviour ascended to heaven. But the part which he retained, viz: baptism, was continued on the same principle, (as to the persons entitled to receive the rite) that it would have been if circumcision had been perpetuated along with it. This will be manifest when we notice attentively two or three facts recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

Certain Jewish converts from Judea produced uneasiness in the minds of the members of the Gentile church in Antioch because they did not practice circumcision. Acts 15: 1, 5. Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem to consult the Apostles and elders on the subject; and after much discussion, a decree was issued to the effect that this was not re-

quired of the churches gathered from among the Gentiles. Acts 15: 6-29. Not long afterwards Paul being again at Jerusalem was informed by James and others that the Jewish believers in that city were suspicious of him, because they heard that he had "taught all the *Jews* which were among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children;" &c., which was not true; and to counteract the injurious effect of this false rumor in diminishing his influence among them and to regain their confidence in him as a preacher and an Apostle, he by the advice of James and the elders, purified himself according to the Mosaic law; designing thereby to show that though circumcision was no longer obligatory and must not be enforced on the Gentile churches, he did not forbid the Jews to practice it; and that "all might know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning him, were nothing," he performed the ceremony of purification publicly in the temple. Acts 21: 21-26.

From these passages of scripture it appears that the Gentile converts omitted circumcision and that the Jewish converts continued to practice it—both of them with the approbation of the Apostles. See farther proof of the same thing in Acts 16: 3, 4; where Paul circumcised Timothy because of the Jews, but delivered to the Gentile churches which he visited, the decrees of the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem, which have just been referred to, exonerating them from the observance of this rite. Both of these facts, though opposite in their character,

bear in favor of infant baptism. Among the Gentile converts infant baptism must have been in general use; otherwise their Jewish brethren who complained because they did not practice circumcision would have complained of this also. Why did they think circumcision obligatory on Gentile believers? Upon no other conceivable ground, than because they regarded the law concerning proselytes as being binding upon them. But they were as particular in requiring proselytes to be baptized as to be circumcised; and as these rites in the case of proselytes were always performed upon their children as well as upon themselves, the silence of the Jews with regard to baptism, affords strong proof not only that baptism was practiced among them, which all admit, but that it was administered in such a way as to be acceptable to the Jews, who were as tenacious in having the *children* of proselytes baptized as their parents, and who would most certainly have complained, if the former had been neglected.

With regard to Jewish believers, whatever may be thought concerning their practice of infant baptism at that time, one thing is certain, that whether they administered baptism to their children or not, they continued to practice infant circumcision. "They" [the believing Jews] says James to Paul, "are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children," &c., *

* * "Do therefore this that we say to thee" * *

* * "and all may know that those things, whereof

they were informed concerning thee, are nothing." Acts 21: 21, 23, 24. From this it is manifest that the Apostles gave their sanction to the circumcision of children among the believing Jews; which proves conclusively that they recognized the doctrine of infant membership in the christian church. The old testament dispensation was passing away—it had already passed away so far as to be no longer obligatory. The New Testament church was fully organized. The Jewish believers had been baptized into the faith of Jesus Christ; or as it is expressed by the sacred historian, "in the name of the Lord Jesus," thereby declaring themselves to be subjects of the Messiah's kingdom. But the *design* of circumcision must have been the same in their minds as formerly. If it was ever the seal of church membership it was so then, and yet the Apostles permitted them to affix this seal to their children; by which permission they virtually said, "your children sustain the same relation to the church that they did before the christian dispensation was introduced." Circumcision was allowed (as we may reasonably believe) on account of the strong partialities of the Jews to this ancient rite and their unwillingness at once to surrender it. But as they obtained from year to year additional light with reference to the New Testament dispensation, they at length saw the propriety of its discontinuance, and hence in due time nothing more is heard about it. Baptism having entirely superseded it and taken its place, must have been administered to the same classes of persons as had

previously received the ordinance of circumcision, i. e. to children as well as adults. This supposition is the only one which enables us to account in a satisfactory way for the *silent manner* in which the former rite fell into disuse. They were strongly attached to the ordinance itself, and consented to give it up only by degrees. But they valued still more highly that relation to the church of which circumcision was the seal; and if the surrender of that particular seal involved also the exclusion of their children from the ecclesiastical relation which they so highly prized, some doubt would certainly have been expressed, some inquiries made, some remonstrance offered. But as there is not a word of either, we cannot doubt that baptism was understood by them to occupy the same position in the christian church which circumcision had done in former times; and hence that while they ceased to circumcise their children, they only laid aside one seal to employ another better adapted to the gospel dispensation.

The history contained in the Acts of the Apostles reaches down to more than half of the first century, and the Apostle John lived till about the close of it. During that time entire harmony appears to have prevailed both among Jewish and Gentile christians on the subject of baptism. After the controversy between the Jews and Gentiles concerning circumcision was settled, there seems to have been no farther disagreement concerning the ordinances of the church. And as the Gentile churches were composed of "proselytes" from the heathen, and the Jew-

ish churches of the descendants of Abraham, we need be at no loss to determine after what has been said, on what principles they harmonized.

About forty years after the death of the Apostle John, lived Justin Martyr, (A. D. 140) who though he discourses on the subject of baptism gives no intimation that there was any controversy among christians on this subject. He alludes however to Col. 2: 11, in such terms as to show that he understood the phrase "circumcision of Christ," to mean christian baptism, and that this came in the place of circumcision; which is the view generally taken of the passage by those who practice infant baptism, and is regarded by them as a proof text in favor of the doctrine.

Less than thirty years from the time of Justin Martyr was Ireneus; (A. D. 167) whose testimony is very explicit as to the practice of the church in his days: "He [i. e. Christ] came to save all persons by himself: all, I mean, who by him are regenerated [baptized] unto God: infants and little ones, and children, and youths, and elder persons." Dr. Wall quotes several passages from Clemens Alexandrinus, then a cotemporary of Ireneus, in which occur the words "regenerate" and "baptize" i. e. the Greek words which are so translated; in which passages they are evidently used as synonymous; thus rendering it very probable, if not certain that Ireneus in the quotation given above, employed the word regenerate in the same sense.*

*The writers of the second century as is shown by Dr. Dodridge, em-

Between thirty and forty years later (A. D. 200) lived Tertulian and Origen. The former recommended the delay of baptism till the child was grown up; but the reason assigned is not that in his judgment infant baptism was unauthorized by the scriptures, concerning which he says nothing; but that it is more profitable for children to receive the ordinance after they have been instructed. Origen says "that the church had from the Apostles a tradition [or order] to give baptism even to infants." And assuming infant baptism to be the acknowledged doctrine of the church he discusses the question concerning its efficacy in removing the pollution of original sin.

Fifty years afterwards flourished Cyprian, who presided at the council of Carthage; (held A. D. 253) before which body was brought a question concerning infant baptism. But the inquiry did not relate to the scriptural authority for baptizing infants. It assumed this as granted. The question discussed was whether christians, in administering baptism, ought to conform to the Jewish law concerning cir-

ployed the word regenerate for baptize, not because they believed in the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, in the same sense as is now held by some, but because baptism being the outward sign of that invisible grace which was denoted by regeneration, and being administered immediately after a person professed to be regenerated, was so nearly simultaneous with the other in point of time, as to give occasion to its being expressed by the term which more truly and scripturally belonged to the change which preceded it; though not, (he thinks) "so universally as some have concluded." "Clemens Alexandrinus" he says "plainly uses the word regenerate, (Strom. lib. ii, page 425) *for a change of character by true repentance.*" See Preface to Dodridge's Sermons on Regeneration, where this subject is discussed at some length.

cumcision; which was to circumcise the child when it was eight days old; or whether it was lawful to baptize an infant at an earlier age.

Thus for one hundred and fifty years subsequent to the decease of the last Apostle, which was 253 years after Christ, we have an unbroken chain of evidence, proving in the clearest manner that infant baptism was generally practiced in the church during all that period, and that it was regarded by its advocates as having been handed down from the Apostles. Proof stronger than this cannot as we think be reasonably expected or desired. We might extend the history through many centuries afterwards with the same results but we deem it unnecessary.

In conclusion, it may be useful to recapitulate, in as brief a manner as possible, the main arguments which have been adduced.

1. The christian church is essentially the same as that which was constituted by God in the time of Abraham; in which infant membership was distinctly recognized and circumcision administered as its sign and seal. Therefore the children of believers now are members of the christian church, and ought to receive the seal of membership; which under the New Testament dispensation is baptism.

2. Christ expressly taught by the words "of such is the kingdom of heaven," that little children would compose a part of his visible church. Therefore they are to receive baptism which was appointed by him to be the seal of membership.

3. Peter also taught the doctrine of infant membership, by saying that the promise contained in the Abrahamic covenant "to be a God to him and his seed," was in force to his posterity and their children on the day of Pentecost; and since he urged them by this consideration to be baptized into the christian faith, it is strongly implied that their children would be entitled to this ordinance as well as their parents.

4. Paul asserted that the children of heathen parents one of whom was a convert to the christian religion, were accounted "*holy*," i. e. proper persons to be dedicated to God; and hence we infer that baptism which was the prescribed ordinance of dedication to God at that time ought to be administered to them.

5. When the commission of our blessed Lord to his Apostles was given them to baptize the nations, the practice of baptizing Gentile proselytes, had been long in use, and in all such cases the children of proselytes were baptized as well as their parents. Hence the Apostles must have understood their commission as having now the same latitude of meaning, and have practiced accordingly, unless expressly told to the contrary, of which there is no intimation.

6. In conformity with the above view of this commission, there are on record several instances of household baptism—a record made in just such language, as if made now by a missionary to the heathen, would convey the idea that the children of

their converts were baptized on the faith of their parents.

7. For sometime after circumcision was laid aside by Gentile believers, it continued to be practiced by those churches which were composed of believing Jews; and in the latter (as is distinctly taught) they circumcised their children; thereby claiming under an Apostolic sanction, the church membership of their offspring. Hence we infer that the Gentile churches held the same doctrine, and that having laid aside circumcision they practiced infant baptism. And farther that the Jewish believers, who for a while employed the old testament seal, but in due time, when they saw the propriety of substituting baptism in its place, ceased to use the rite of circumcision, would as a matter of course, unless forbidden, apply the ordinance of baptism to their children.

8. Accordingly after the close of the record of the first planting of the churches, as contained in the Acts of the Apostles, no difference of opinion appears to have existed for several centuries concerning the scriptural authority for infant baptism, and the practice which was universal in the church, with a single exception, was regarded by all as having the sanction of Apostolic example.

To invalidate these arguments, it is not sufficient to refer to those texts of Scripture which teach believers baptism; because these passages are understood in the same way by pædo-baptists (i. e. by those who baptize children) as by their baptist breth-

ren. Neither is it sufficient to adduce *examples* of believers' baptism, because these are admitted by those who notwithstanding baptize infants. The eunuch for instance believed and was baptized. The record is as consistent with a belief in household baptism as with its opposite. He was on a journey, and for aught that appears, had no attendants except the driver of his chariot. Of course there could have been no record of a household baptism, because he had no household to be baptized.

Before the force of these arguments can be destroyed, it must be shown that God having once admitted the children of believing parents to membership in his church, deprived them at some subsequent time of this privilege; or that the christian church is a totally different body and constituted on a different basis from the church in the time of Abraham, and that we cannot properly reason from one to the other; that circumcision was not a seal of church membership, but though instituted in a single family four hundred years before the descendants of Abraham became a nation, was nevertheless a mark of national distinction, and that baptism did not come in its place; that notwithstanding the undoubted fact of the existence among the Jews of proselyte baptism, including children as well as adults, the Apostles did not interpret their commission "to teach and baptize," agreeably to this common and well known practice, but understood it as authorizing them to baptize believers only; that when Christ said concerning little children who were

brought to him, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," he did not mean little children in age, but those who possessed the temper of little children; or if he did, that he had no reference to their membership in the christian church or even to their future happiness in heaven; that the households of Lydia and the jailor had no children in them, or if they contained children, that these were baptized on their own profession of faith and not on the faith of those pious householders; that Jewish believers who were so tenacious in practicing infant circumcision, as to be permitted by the Apostles to continue it for some time after the commencement of the christian dispensation, not only abandoned this rite in due time, but also the doctrine of infant membership of which it was the seal, and consented without remonstrance or objection of any kind, to have their children excluded from the visible church and to stand in the same relation (being neither circumcised nor baptized) as that which hath hitherto been sustained by the uncircumcised Gentiles; and finally, that as soon as the last of the Apostles had left the world, christians began immediately and universally to mistake their teaching and their practice, and to fall into the error of baptizing the children of believing parents, and also to think, contrary to the truth, that in doing thus, they were imitating the example of inspired men. Until all this can be made to appear, we shall maintain our belief in the doctrine of infant baptism, and regard the ordinance both as a duty and a privilege.

We repeat however what we said in substance, at the close of the first part. Towards the respectable body of christians from whom we differ on this subject, we entertain kind feelings and extend to them the hand of christian charity. In our judgment they would find it greatly to their advantage; could they change their views and their practice in this particular. But as they think otherwise, it is not our purpose to engage in angry controversy with them, or indulge in severe remarks concerning what we deem to be their error.

To those for whose special benefit this little volume is designed, we may be allowed to speak with freedom. Though you should not be indifferent to truth, nor undervalue its importance, but on the contrary, "buy the truth and sell it not," and "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;" yet you must not forget the Divine injunction to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Exercise christian forbearance and courtesy towards those who differ from you and strive rather to extend the boundaries of Christ's kingdom among unconverted men, than to gain over proselytes from other evangelical christian churches. The field for christian exertion is sufficiently ample for all to operate in without sectarian jealousy; and love for souls is a motive which ought to be sufficiently strong to kindle and keep alive your zeal, without the excitement of unhallowed, partizan emulation.

We have only to add in this place that if you have been satisfied with our views thus far, do not lay

aside the book till you shall have perused what follows; in which it will be our purpose to consider in a brief manner the importance of this ordinance. As that is a point of great practical utility, we bespeak for it your serious attention.

PART III.

IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

That baptism is important may be assumed; because our blessed Lord would not have perpetuated a useless ceremony as a standing ordinance of the christian church. To attempt a proof therefore of this simple proposition would be superfluous. Hence our object will be not to prove, but illustrate; to show wherein its importance consists; who may expect to be benefitted by it; how God makes use of it as the medium of bestowing his covenant mercies; what duties it involves, and the incentives which it furnishes for the faithful discharge of these duties. Questions embracing these and other kindred points, ought not to be treated with indifference by any who have immortal souls, or to whom God has committed the responsibility of caring for the souls of others.

I. Baptism not a saving ordinance.

The importance of baptism does not lie in its being as some maintain, the invariable channel for the communication of saving grace. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration has assumed two aspects—one respecting adults, the other infants. Those who hold the former rely mainly upon the following texts: “Born of water;” (John 3: 5.) “Washing of regeneration;” (Titus 3; 5.) “Repent and be baptized ev-

ery one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." (Acts 2: 38.)

With regard to the first two phrases, though there is an allusion to water baptism, it is merely an allusion. The ordinance is referred to only as the basis of a figure to describe the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart, of which baptism is a sign or emblem. This is evident from the fact that in both passages the Holy Spirit's work is immediately mentioned as explanatory of the preceding allusions; thereby showing that the former are to be interpreted figuratively and not literally, thus: "Born of water and of the Spirit." "Washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The connecting copulative "and," as the best critics admit, may be translated "even;" which rendering shows more clearly than is now done in the English version, that the latter clause is exegetical of the former. The context, particularly in John 3: 5, proves the same thing. In the following verses our Saviour makes no farther reference to water, but predicates his reasoning altogether on the other clause, viz: being born of the Spirit. The consequences of such an exposition are likewise sufficient to prove it incorrect. If water baptism be meant except by way of allusion as above explained, it would follow that baptism is essential to salvation; which few we presume, are willing to maintain.

In the other passage "Repent and be baptized, &c., for the remission of sins," the Apostle Peter, by a figure of speech which often occurs in Scripture,

called metonymy, employed the sign for the thing signified by it; i. e. he used the term baptism instead of faith, because to be baptized in the name of Christ was a profession of their faith in him as the Son of God and the Saviour of men, whose blood was the foundation of the remission of sins, and without the shedding of which, remission could not be bestowed. See Mat. 26: 28, and Heb. 9: 22. In Acts 5: 31, remission of sins is connected with repentance, and in Chap. 13: 38, 39, with faith in Christ, without the mention of baptism at all. Will any one pretend that there are two ways of obtaining remission? one by means of these graces and the other by baptism? If not then it is obvious that baptism is mentioned in connexion with remission, as being a sign of these graces, through which instrumentally, we become interested in the benefits of Christ's death, which is the meritorious and procuring cause of our forgiveness.

The doctrine which maintains the saving efficacy of water baptism is disproved—

1. By the circumstance that faith in Christ is required in order to entitle an adult to receive this ordinance. "See here is water" said the eunuch to Philip, (Acts 8: 36, 37,) "what doth hinder me to be baptized?" And Philip said, "If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest."

2. By the analogy between baptism and circumcision. "He [Abraham] received the sign of circumcision a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." Rom. 4: 11.

Compare this with Gal. 3 : 26-29, where baptism is spoken of in very similar language.

3. If baptism is a saving ordinance the Apostle Paul instead of thanking God that he had baptized only Crispus, and Gaius, and the household of Stephanas, (see 1st Cor. : 14, 16,) would have endeavored to baptize all he possibly could. And farther, he could not have said in truth as he does (v. 17) that "Christ sent him not to baptize but to preach the gospel." Christ sent him to endeavor "by all means" in his power to save men; (1st Cor. 9 : 19-22) and hence if their being baptized would save them he was under the most solemn obligations to administer the ordinance to as many as he could persuade to receive it.

4. Simon Magus was baptized by Philip on a profession of his faith. Acts 8 : 13. Though it appears from what followed, that he was not a sincere believer, it is obvious from the narrative that he did not receive the ordinance in order to make him a believer, but because he had previously declared himself to be one. Again, if this had been the object, the ordinance failed in his case to produce the designed effect. Soon after his baptism Peter told him that his "heart was not right in the sight of God; yea that he was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." And farther still, when the Apostle declared him to be in that sinful and perilous condition, he did not exhort him to be re-baptized in order to his obtaining forgiveness, as he would have done if the ordinance were efficacious to this end;

but to "repent of his wickedness and pray to God." Acts 8 : 21-23.

Concerning the baptismal regeneration of infants, the question is not whether the word regenerate has ever been employed by theological writers, in a general ecclesiastical sense, answering to the word baptize; but whether the change described in the bible by the term regeneration, conveys the idea of no greater change in the heart of a child, than what the ordinance of baptism is capable of producing? than what it does *in fact* produce, when the ordinance is administered by a duly authorized person? On this point we remark—

1. That if the claim set up consists in this, viz : that saving grace is conferred through this ordinance by the official authority of the administrator, it is sufficient to reply that the Scriptures give no such authority to any mere man, and they connect no such efficacy with any religious ordinance. Christ had power on earth to forgive sins, but He alone. But even He never employed the ordinance of baptism as the medium of communicating forgiveness, much less did He impart such a virtue to the ordinance in the hands of any other person. It is a sign and seal of remission of sins; but we look in vain for any Scripture which teaches that the ordinance itself conveys this blessing or that the administrator conveys it by his official authority by means of this ordinance as a channel of communication.

2. If the ground assumed be that baptism is the channel through which the *Holy Spirit* communicates

saving grace to the heart of the child, we admit that this *may* be the case and sometimes it doubtless is. We believe farther that this would occur more frequently if parents in presenting their children to God through this ordinance exercised stronger faith in that covenant of which baptism is the seal. But we deny that saving grace is so connected with the ordinance that the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit invariably accompany its administration. The bible teaches no such doctrine and there are several considerations which prove it to be false. (1.) We have seen that the saving influences of the Holy Spirit do not always accompany the baptism of adults; and if not, by what rule will children form an exception? (2.) On this principle it is incredible that infant baptism should be confined to the children of believers. Such is the benevolence of the gospel, that if the ordinance properly administered is always saving in its effects, the first preachers of christianity would have been commissioned to baptize indiscriminately all the little children and infants who might fall in their way. (3.) If baptism possessed invariably a saving efficacy, the result would be that all baptized children will, immediately after their baptism or as soon as they are capable of doing so, exhibit evidences of being born again, or in other words, of possessing new hearts. This result would follow wherever the virtue might be supposed to lie, whether in the intrinsic power of the ordinance, the official authority of the administrator, or the agency of the Holy

Spirit. But it is well known that the history of the ordinance brings us to a different conclusion. The inference is that a theory which leads to such a consequence must be erroneous.

II. The baptism of believers a seal of a public profession of religion.

In introducing converts into the church from families not professing religion, baptism was appointed by Christ as a sign of their being united to him by faith through the agency of the Holy Spirit, and as a seal of their solemn engagement or covenant to live to his glory. The first of these is implied in the language of Peter at the house of Cornelius: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we." Acts 10: 47. And the second, in the language of Paul to the Galatians: "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Gal. 3: 27. Here in one passage the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts of which baptism is an emblem, was assigned as a reason for administering the ordinance; and in the other the reception of baptism is declared to be a solemn profession of "putting on Christ; i. e. of being known as his disciples and as pledged to promote the honor of his name. Viewed in this light baptism is identical with a public profession of religion; and hence whatever importance is attached to the latter belongs to the former. Though in itself considered it is not essential to salvation, it becomes so whenever its neglect arises from our being asha-

med of Christ. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Rom. 10: 9, 10. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Again, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my word in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Mat. 10: 32, 33. Mark 8: 38. Luke 9: 26.

But besides being a public declaration of discipleship, it is when properly understood an assent to the great cardinal doctrines of christianity; particularly the doctrine of the Holy Trinity into whose name the candidate is baptized; (Mat. 28: 19,) the vicarious death and atonement of Jesus Christ a belief in which baptism always implies, (Rom. 6: 3,) and regeneration through the operations of the Holy Spirit on the heart, creating us anew in Christ Jesus unto good works; which change is especially referred to and set forth in adult baptism. Rom. 6: 4-6.

And further—as it is tantamount to a solemn covenant to be the Lord's, it operates as a powerful *incentive* to a holy life. To all the motives connected with the consideration of God's love to us, we by our baptism superadd another, consisting in our voluntary, personal consecration to his worship and service. What a man freely and religiously binds

himself to do, ratifying his engagement by an ordinance so sacred as this, he will feel under particular obligations to perform. Accordingly our baptism becomes a means of making us watchful and prayerful, and thus of increasing our spiritual strength and promoting our growth in grace. A pious German lady, concerning whom we read some years ago, when tempted to evil, effectually resisted the temptation, by responding, "I cannot sin, for I have been baptized."

III. Benefits of infant baptism.

Infant baptism is beneficial—

1. From its connexion with that gracious covenant which God entered into with believing parents and their children. That such a covenant was made we shall here assume, because the proof has been already adduced. We shall also for the same reason take for granted that baptism is the seal of that covenant. To be baptized is therefore to enter into covenant with God. The adult subject of baptism does this for himself alone. In infant baptism the same is done in behalf of the child by the parent or guardian who acts as its sponsor. The question now is, what benefit accrues to the child from its being thus brought into covenant with God?—the act being performed by another, and the child being altogether unconscious of the transaction? The *ignorance* of the child is the chief objection implied in this interrogatory. But will any one maintain that a child cannot be spiritually benefitted until it is old enough to act for itself? and of course old enough

to act intelligently and understandingly? If so, he must reject the doctrine of infant salvation, and thus rob the mourning parent of that precious solace felt by him in his bereavement, which is derived from a belief that his deceased babe is happy. If infants are capable of being prepared for heaven, they are capable of being benefitted by those means which are adapted to this end; one of which is their pious dedication to God. Though they cannot themselves act intelligently and understandingly, their parents can; and if they perform a duty in behalf of their offspring which God approves and enjoins, it accords with the plainest dictates of reason and common sense to conclude, that the children of such parents will be more likely to enjoy the Divine blessing than they would be if no such act of parental piety had been performed. Once settle in the affirmative the question of duty, and the inquiry what good will it do, is out of place. It is not "a vain thing to serve God." He knows what he has promised in his covenant as well as what he has required; and he is able and faithful to fulfil his promises, though the persons with respect to whom they were made, may be too young to offer him their devotion. The baptism of a child is a recognition by the parent of God's covenant; it implies an appreciation of its blessings; it is an act of worship and involves a devout and earnest prayer that the benefits of the covenant may be bestowed upon the child. Admitting now that the child is ignorant of the transaction; that he is too young to know anything about it; still

if the transaction itself (as has been shown) is an act performed in accordance with Scripture and not an unauthorized ceremony, and if the duty is attended to with such views and feelings on the part of the parent as God approves, it will seldom fail to be beneficial sooner or later. Read the history of Samuel, and tell me whether it was of no benefit to him that his pious mother "lent" him to the Lord in his early childhood. See 1st Sam. 1: 24-28, and chap. 3: 1-10. When he was yet a little child God called him in an extraordinary manner by his grace, made him subsequently a prophet and a judge in Israel, and honored him with other distinguished tokens of his favour. Who is willing to say that these gifts and graces would have been conferred upon him if he had been born of an irreligious mother? or if she though religious, had neglected her duty to him in this respect? She with a pious heart devoted him to God ;the offering was accepted; and a rich train of blessings quickly followed.

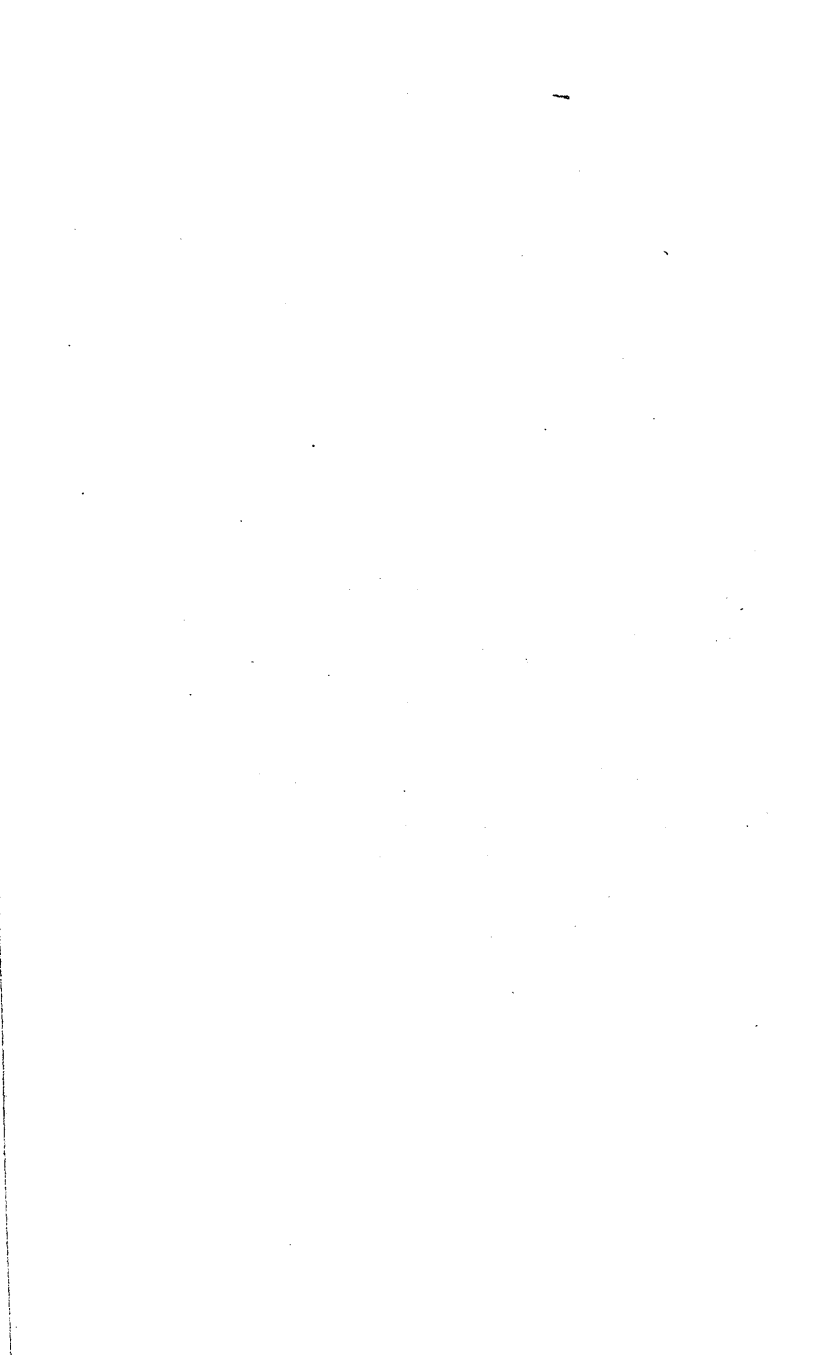
2. Infant baptism is beneficial from its tendency to secure to the child early religious instruction. *This is promised* by the parents either expressly or impliedly when the ordinance is administered, and hence its tendency. Parents we admit, *can* instruct their children faithfully in the doctrines and duties of religion without having previously devoted them to God by baptism. But the question is not whether they *can*, but whether they *will*? i. e. whether they will be as likely to do it? Will they probably feel as strongly their obligations? and attend to their

duty as diligently in the one case as in the other? If a parent is a believer in this covenant and regards himself as being solemnly pledged by the act of dedicating his child to God in baptism, to "train it up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" this pledge, it is obvious, is adapted to stimulate him to the faithful discharge of the duties expressed or implied in it; and hence just so far as infant baptism produces this effect, it is beneficial. The Jews were so diligent in teaching their children the word of God that Josephus says, "Every one of our people being asked concerning the laws, rehearseth them more easily than his own name." What an immense benefit was this to that nation! And yet no one it is presumed, will deny that this result was secured in a great degree by the relation they sustained to God as his covenant people—he enjoining upon them and they virtually promising thus to train up their families. See Deut. 4: 10, and 6: 6, 7.

3. Infant baptism is beneficial in that it brings the child into an important relation to the church, and secures to it several valuable church privileges. The standards of the Presbyterian church maintain that "all baptized children are members of the church, are under its care, and subject to its government and discipline; and when they have arrived at years of discretion, they are bound to perform all the duties of church members." In our church records they are not placed on our list of members nor reported as such, until they become communicants; yet they are as *really* members before as afterwards;

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.





though not precisely in the same sense. To illustrate this difference, we will adduce a familiar example. Our little children are citizens of the United States as *truly* as their parents, and they derive important benefits from their citizenship. Yet while they are in their minority, there are some duties which they are not qualified to perform, and some privileges which they are not entitled to enjoy. So though baptized children are members of the church, they are ecclesiastically as well as naturally, in a state of minority; and the duties which they are competent to perform and the privileges they can enjoy, are such only as belong to minors. The continuance of their ecclesiastical minority does not however depend on the same conditions as their political. Whenever they possess sufficient knowledge to "discern the Lord's body," in the true Scriptural sense of this phrase, (1 Cor. 11 : 29,) whatever may be their ages, they have a right to all the privileges of church members, and not before; and so far as their age and qualifications in other respects may justify, they are then expected to discharge all the duties incumbent on members of the church in full communion. Before this no less than afterwards, they are under the "care, government and discipline" of the church, similar to those exercised over children in their father's house. As the instructions and restraints of the family are a great privilege to the child, so are those of the church. In neither case are they always esteemed to be a privilege. Refractory, ungovernable children, are impatient of pa-

rental control. But in their riper years they often bless God for having given them such parents. In like manner, they sometimes feel restive and unhappy as church members, under the corrective appliances of religion; but when they come (as they frequently do) to appreciate their value, they will remember them with approbation and gratitude, as having been the means under God of checking them in their downward course of sin, and placing them in the path of life.

As the only two sacraments authorized by the New Testament, viz: baptism and the Lord's supper, sustain an intimate relation to each other, this may be a suitable place to notice what that relation is, and in what sense infant baptism is beneficial as a preparation for the other christian sacrament. Both of these sacraments are signs and seals of the covenant of grace. Their institution was designed to be on God's part, a visible token of his grace and mercy to men through the Lord Jesus Christ; and their reception by us is an outward sign of our solemn recognition of his covenant and our reliance upon it for pardon and salvation. They differ from each other in that baptism is our formal reception of God's covenant and of that Saviour who is the sum and substance of it; and the Lord's supper is our grateful recognition and remembrance of its blessings and comforts, after having previously in our baptism assented to and embraced it. Baptism is to be administered but once, because it marks our induction into the visible church, and having once

entered it we are to continue there till the end of life, and have no necessity for being initiated a second time. A repetition of our baptism would be a virtual admission that the taking of our oath of allegiance to God once, was insufficient to bind us and needed renewing; or that his fidelity to us as ratified by the ordinance, might be called in question and needed additional confirmation. The Lord's supper is different. It is designed as a memorial of those blessings which were purchased by the death of Christ. And since it is highly useful and important for us to keep alive in our hearts a grateful remembrance of those blessings, the frequent administration of the ordinance is adapted to this end; and hence our Savior provided for its repetition by his followers at no distant intervals as long as they live.

With regard to infants, baptism when administered to them is just as truly a seal of the covenant of grace as it is to adults. The principal difference is that in adult baptism the candidate expresses his assent to the covenant and his reliance upon it for his own salvation; whereas in infant baptism this assent is given not by the child itself but by his parents in his behalf—they professing their belief in the same truths as they would in their own baptism, and promising to endeavor by God's assistance, to make their child acquainted with them and to embrace them cordially for himself. Here lies the benefit of infant baptism as it stands related to the Lord's supper. The former from its being the ap-

pointed visible sign of church membership, would seem to give all baptized persons an ecclesiastical right to the latter, irrespective of their age or other qualifications. This however does not follow ; because the inspired record expressly enjoins upon communicants self examination : "Let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." This implies that he has "arrived at the years of discretion," and that he must possess certain moral or rather spiritual qualifications in order to make him a worthy communicant ; concerning the existence of which in his own heart he is required to make diligent search. These qualifications are described by the phrase "knowledge to discern the Lord's body" ; which include a competent theoretical knowledge of God's method of saving sinners through Jesus Christ, and that knowledge of a higher kind produced by the Holy Spirit, by which the recipient of the ordinance is enabled to behold with an eye of faith the excellency and glory of Christ as the Saviour of sinners and to choose him as the only portion of his soul.*

*It has been affirmed that the infant children of Jewish parents were church members in full communion, and were admitted at an early age to the Passover irrespective of any moral qualifications ; and hence that on the principles assumed in this treatise, baptized children ought to be admitted now in the same way to the Lord's supper. But we think the ground taken above with regard to Jewish children cannot be sustained by facts. The most approved commentators agree that the age at which our Saviour came to the Passover viz : at twelve years, which is said (Luke 2 : 42) to have been "after the custom of the feast," was the earliest time at which this was permitted according to Jewish usage ; and that even then they were not admitted without regard to their moral and religious characters. In proof of this, we might adduce the opin-

Though infant baptism does not with certainty and in all cases secure this fitness for the Lord's supper, it does secure in some good degree, in addition to the prayers and religious instruction of pious parents, that "care, government and discipline" of the church, which when faithfully and kindly carried out, according to the requirements of Christ and his Apostles, are eminently adapted to bring those within her inclosure, to seek at the Saviour's cross that peace of conscience which can be found no where else, and at the Lord's table that communion with him and his people which is an antepast of heaven. We doubt not that many while partaking of the Lord's supper and feasting by faith upon the heavenly manna of which it may be regarded as in some sense an emblem, have blessed God in their hearts and said, "Had it not been for our early initiation by baptism into the school of Christ, where we were taught to seek his grace and fear his name, we should not have been here to-day enjoying such tokens of his favor."

Says the distinguished commentator Matthew Henry, "I cannot but take occasion to express my

ions of Calvin, Patrick, Poole, Rosenmuller, Kuinoel, and Bloomfield. But we deem it sufficient to quote a passage from Dr. Gill an eminent Baptist commentator. "According to the maxims of the Jews," says he, "persons were not obliged to the duties of the law, or subject to the penalties of it in case of non-performance, until they were, a *female*, at the age of *twelve years and one day*, and a *male*, at the age of *thirteen years and one day*." "They were not reckoned *adult members till then*: nor then either, unless *worthy persons*;" for so it is said, "*He that is worthy is called, at thirteen years of age, a son of the congregation of Israel, that is, a member of the church.*"

gratitude to God for my infant baptism : not only as it was an early admission into the visible body of Christ, but as it furnished my parents with a good argument and I trust through grace, a prevailing argument for an early dedication of myself to God in my early childhood. If God has ever wrought any good work upon my soul, I desire with humble thankfulness, to acknowledge the influence of my infant baptism upon it." See his Life Vol. 1st of his Commentary.

4. Infant baptism beneficial to parents, to the church, and through her to mankind.

Its beneficial tendency upon parents may be seen from the fact already adduced—that it makes them more faithful in seeking the spiritual welfare of their children. Parental faithfulness not only benefits the children but the parents also. Intercessory prayer is as valuable to him who offers it as to those in whose behalf it is offered; and so of any other kind of scriptural effort for the salvation of our households.

Again, if infant baptism is a duty, its performance is well pleasing to God, and cannot fail to benefit those who with proper views comply with the Divine injunction. "In his favor is life." To the honor of Enoch it is recorded that "he pleased God"; and of Zachariah and Elizabeth that "they walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

And farther, infant baptism is beneficial to parents, by leading them to serious reflections concerning their

own spiritual condition. It involves a renewal of their covenant vows, which cannot be done by a pious parent without profitable reflections. But it is particularly beneficial in this view of the case to a certain class of parents. Sometimes those who have been baptized in their infancy and have families of their own, desire to present their children to God in baptism, though they have not made a public profession of religion and received the sacrament of the Lord's supper. A request of this kind affords a favourable opportunity to the pastor, to instruct such parents concerning the nature of the ordinance, the solemn vows they virtually make in having it administered to their children, and the qualifications requisite to enable them to make and perform these vows in such a manner as will be acceptable to God. If they are told (as they should be) that the same frame of mind is requisite for the proper discharge of this duty, as in coming to the Lord's table; that if they are unfit for the one, they are also for the other; that the ordinance is not a mere *form*, for the purpose of giving the child a christian name, but an act of religious worship, in which the parents solemnly profess their faith in the triune God; and that though it is both their duty and privilege to have their children baptized, it is likewise their duty and privilege to come to the Lord's table; but that in neither case can they do it acceptably without regenerated hearts; such instructions as these, given under circumstances of so much interest to the parents, are adapted in a high degree to produce upon their minds a salu-

tary impression. They may be in a state of anxious inquiry, which may by this course, be ripened into christian experience. Or they may have met with a change of heart, but are prevented by various reasons from performing many of the duties and enjoying the comforts of religion. An occasion of this kind may be blessed of God to revive their graces, dissipate their darkness, and influence them to come with joyful obedience and present both their children and themselves to the Lord. Or if as may sometimes happen, they are careless about their souls, will not a faithful and affectionate conversation of this kind be well calculated to awaken, convict and convert them? The question, what course ought to be pursued with regard to complying with the request of such parents, is answered differently by different persons. The instructions recommended in the preceding remarks, are applicable in either case, whether the request be granted or denied. But as the question has been raised, we will say concerning it, that where such parents give evidence of piety and consent with cordiality to the obligations implied in the ordinance, they ought, in our judgment, to be allowed the privilege of baptism for their children, though they may not see their way clear to come to the Lord's table; but where they do not give this evidence, the ordinance should be postponed—not refused but postponed—and the opportunity thus afforded, should be improved with promptness and fidelity, to bring them to that state of mind which will render it proper at length to gratify their

wishes. If they continue thoughtless, and appear to have no reverence for God, and manifest no disposition to perform devotional and other religious duties, and especially if they are immoral in their conduct, it will be no blessing either to them or their children to have the ordinance of infant baptism administered. They have moreover no right to claim it; and hence they should be refused, unless some pious relative or friend who is so situated as to be able to carry out what he promises, will with the consent of the parents, become the child's sponsor, and engage to train it up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Infant baptism is beneficial to the church, by exciting in the minds of her members a lively and practical interest in the spiritual welfare of those who are thus committed to her special care. Let our adult church members feel as they ought, that the hundreds of young children thus solemnly introduced to their notice, are by this act entrusted to them, to be prayed for, instructed and watched over; and it requires no unusual discernment to perceive that a church composed of such members, will possess a vigorous, active piety; that she will abound in good works, be fervent in prayer and have additions made to her communion from time to time, "of such as shall be saved." But besides its tendency to this end arising from the faith and zeal of the church, it is beneficial to her, and through her to mankind, from its relation to that covenant which secures the perpetuity and enlargement of Christ's kingdom on

earth. Every instance of infant baptism is a recognition of that covenant promise, on the fulfilment of which are suspended the continuance and universal extension of the means of grace. "What advantage hath the Jew, and what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way; chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Rom. 3: 1, 2. See also chap. 9: 4. While all the surrounding nations were enveloped in Pagan darkness, that people, by virtue of the covenant which God made with Abraham, of which circumcision was the seal, enjoyed for many hundred years the means of grace, and in multitudes of instances, grace itself, as the fruit of those means. It was likewise on the ground of that covenant that the inspired psalmist prayed for the extension of the church among the Gentiles. "Have respect unto the covenant; for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." Ps. 74: 20. The covenant promised that all the nations of the earth should be blessed in Abraham and his seed; (see Gen. 12: 3, and 17: 4,) and that prayer of the psalmist was a plea for the fulfilment of the promise contained in the covenant. We are the descendants of some of those for whom the psalmist then prayed. We enjoy our religious privileges by virtue of that covenant, and in answer to that prayer. We are now by adoption the children of the covenant; and our adherence to it, as manifested by affixing its seal to our children, and performing its requirements in other respects, must be regarded as one of the means by which the priv-

ileges we enjoy are to be perpetuated through succeeding generations. It is likewise a plea for the conversion of the heathen, which we may now urge as appropriately as was done at any former period. "Have respect to the covenant; for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." The practice of infant baptism is a continued repetition of this prayer. It is virtually saying to God, "O Lord, after we are dead, let the church live and flourish in the persons of our children and children's children; and by means of us and them let it be enlarged and extended so as to embrace within its pale all the families of the earth." True we could offer this prayer at any time; but its connexion with the ordinance of christian baptism gives it peculiar force. If such a prayer is implied in the ordinance, there is also implied in it a Divine promise that the prayer will be heard and answered. In thus entering into covenant with believers, God not only exacted a duty from them, but made a promise to them. Baptism is as much a seal of the covenant on his part as on theirs. By his direction they affix the seal, and the solemn contract between them is thereby confirmed. They pledge fidelity to him; and he, on the basis of the covenant as originally made, secures the perpetuity and enlargement of his church, and makes to them individually a *conditional* promise, that if they fulfil their covenant vows, the church shall be perpetuated in their families and descendants. See Gen. 18 : 19. In this view of the case, it is impossible to estimate the extent of the

benefits resulting from infant baptism. They are as wide as the world, and as perpetual as the course of time.

IV. The time and manner in which infant baptism should be attended to, and the duties growing out of it.

As to the *time*, it should be performed without unnecessary delay. Under the old testament dispensation, circumcision was required to be on the eighth day. Before that time the child was reckoned unclean, and could not therefore be presented to God in that ordinance. See Lev. 12: 2, 3. For the same reason animals were not permitted to be offered in sacrifice till they were eight days old. Lev. 22: 27. This circumstance is regarded by Christians as ceremonial, and not to be observed now in the baptism of infants. This was the question which came before the council of Carthage in the time of Cyprian in the third century. See pages 110 and 111 of this volume. An important principle is however involved in that requirement. As the eighth day was the earliest time in which it could be lawfully performed, so that day was definitely fixed, and could not be postponed in ordinary circumstances, without incurring guilt. A remarkable instance of this is recorded in Exodus 4: 24-26. A son of Moses for some reason which is not stated, was permitted to continue uncircumcised after the time prescribed for the performance of this rite. The Lord was displeased with Moses on account of this neglect. "And it came to pass by the way in the inn, the Lord met him and

sought to kill him.” Whether we are to understand some visible appearance of the Almighty, or the infliction of some sudden and violent disease, by which Moses’ life was threatened, it is not necessary for us to inquire. The cause of this visitation was well understood by the parents of the child, and the rite was immediately performed; after which the the Lord’s chastening hand was at once withdrawn. This teaches us that unnecessary delay is sinful. It indicates a reluctance to comply with the divine injunction, which cannot be otherwise than displeasing to God. Our children should therefore be presented to the Lord in baptism at as early a day after the their birth as circumstances will permit. A *prompt* discharge of this duty shews a *willing* heart; a just appreciation of the ordinance as a christian *privilege*; and not as being in our view a small matter, a mere outward ceremony, which it is immaterial whether we attend to or not.*

* It has been inferred by some from 2nd Chron. 31: 14, that the longest time at which circumcision could be delayed with impunity was till the child was three years old. That was the time of weaning him, and he was then brought to the house of the Lord and his name registered in the genealogy of the family to which he belonged. Compare the text just referred to with 1 Sam. 1: 22-54. If the child had not been circumcised, he lost his place in the genealogy. This (as some understand it) is what is meant by “cutting off the uncircumcised man child from among the people.” See Gen. 17: 14. By this act he was excluded from having any part in the peculiar privileges of an Israelite. He might however, as is generally supposed, be circumcised voluntarily at any time afterwards, when old enough to act for himself, and so be restored to his forfeited privileges; and it is also argued by some from Gen. 17, 27, that the parents might obtain his restoration by having him circumcised, if not over thirteen years of age, but that if he was older than

With regard to the *manner*, it should be attended to *piously*, i. e., with a *prayerful, devout spirit*, and a *lively faith* in God. The frame of mind indicated by these terms, implies that the duty be performed in obedience to Divine authority, and not merely because it is the practice of the church of which we are members, or for the purpose of giving the child a name; that it be engaged in as an act of religious dedication of the child to God and his service, with an earnest petition for its speedy conversion and future usefulness; and that banishing all distrust of God's faithfulness, strong confidence be exercised in him as a covenant keeping God, who according to his promise, will "shew mercy unto thousands [of generations] of them that love him and keep his commandments."

The duties growing out of the ordinance relate both to parents and children, and also to the Church. Upon parents it imposes the duty of bringing up their families "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." This implies daily prayer with and for them; watching over them and restraining them from vice and temptation; and faithful and repeated religious instruction; particularly the frequent reading to them and by them of God's holy word. "I know him [Abraham] that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the

this he could not receive the ordinance on the faith of his parents, but only by his own free choice. This may serve as a guide to parents now as to the age above which it is unsuitable to have their children baptized, except on their own profession of faith.



FAMILY WORSHIP.

way of the Lord to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." Gen. 18: 19. "And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. 6: 6, 7. "Correct thy son and he shall give thee rest; yea he shall give delight to thy soul." Prov. 29: 17. "Pour out thy fury" . . . "upon the families that call not on thy name." Jer. 8: 25. See also Ex. 20: 5, 6; Ps. 79: 1-4, 6, 7; Prov. 22: 6. These several passages strongly inculcate the duties of family devotion, instruction, and restraint; and they teach that these duties must be performed by heads of families if they expect their children and households to be blessed. No more manifestly did the Divine favor rest on the house of Obededom, on account of his pious care of the ark, (2 Sam. 6. 12.) than it does in every age, on those households from whose altars the incense of devout worship ascends up daily "as a memorial before God." No more sure were the beneficial effects of pious instruction and restraint on the family of Abraham, (Gen. 18. 19.) or of Joshua, (Josh. 24. 15.) than they are now on those families where the parents or others who are placed over them, imitate the examples of those holy men. Eli neglected those duties, particularly the latter. "His sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not;" in consequence of which the

Lord caused judgments to be denounced upon his house forever. 1 Sam. 3: 13. The same consequences may be expected to follow similar neglects at the present day. "The Lord God is a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him." What encouraging motives are here presented to excite christian parents to fidelity in the discharge of parental duties! And how fearful are the evils of neglect!

The duties devolving on baptized children with reference to this ordinance, are such as the following: They ought in early life to devote themselves in a devout manner to that triune God in whose name they have been baptized; to endeavor to become qualified for and to seek a place at the Lord's table, to which privilege their baptism gives them in the sense already described, an ecclesiastical right; and to carry out in their lives that practical integrity, sound morality and true godliness, which are enjoined in the scriptures upon all men, but are especially obligatory upon those who stand thus related to the church.

Mr. Philip Henry, father of the celebrated commentator, Matthew Henry, prepared and taught to his children the following baptismal covenant:

"I take God the Father to be my chiefest good and highest end.

I take God the Son to be my Prince and Saviour.

I take God the Holy Ghost to be my sanctifier, teacher, guide and comforter.

I take the word of God to be my rule in all my actions.

And the people of God to be my people in all conditions.

I do likewise devote and dedicate unto the Lord, my whole self, all I am, all I have, and all I can do.

And this I do deliberately, sincerely, freely and forever."

Each of his children was required to repeat this covenant every Lord's day, the father putting his *amen* to it, and sometimes adding, "So say, and so do, and you are made forever."

Let all baptized children adopt this covenant as their own. Let them renew it in a solemn and devout manner at short intervals. We can assure them that if they "so say and so do, they are made forever."

The church has likewise important duties to perform with reference to this ordinance. The proper ecclesiastical authorities should see that the members do not neglect or unnecessarily postpone the ordinance; that parents are faithful in fulfilling their covenant engagements to their children, entered into at their baptism; that baptized children are properly cared for, instructed and catechized, encouraged to attend the house of God, Sabbath Schools, &c., and if orphans, be provided with suitable homes where their religious education will be secured. The "care, government and discipline" of the church, as exercised over them, should be parental rather than judicial; consisting of kind, christian counsels, admonitions and reproofs; not of charges officially pre-

ferred, and succeeded by the usual forms of legal process. Should such results as are desired and hoped for not be realized, a sound discretion must be exercised as to what farther steps may in due time be required under the circumstances of the case. But if, as we have seen, the minority of a child in his father's house, furnishes a suitable illustration of the relation of baptized children to the church; the *proper treatment* of a child by his father for neglect of duty, will serve to illustrate the appropriate discipline of the church in such an event. A parent will bear long with an undutiful son, and endeavor by assiduous and protracted efforts to reclaim him from his sinful course, before he proceeds to disown him; and when he feels constrained to adopt so severe a measure, his purpose is carried into effect not by a formal, much less a public exclusion from the family circle; but by a silent withdrawal of parental favor. With a forbearance and tenderness similar to this, according to our opinion, should be the treatment of baptized children.

Again, this class of church members ought to receive the special attention of their pastor. When Moses had written the law he delivered it to the *priests*, the sons of Levi, and commanded them, saying, "Gather the people together on the year of release, men women and *children*, and read the law unto them, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord," &c. Deut. 31: 9-13. So it should be now. In the injunction of our Saviour to Peter, "Feed my sheep, feed my lambs," we are

taught that under the new testament dispensation, the spiritual supervision of children, as well as others, is committed to ministers of the gospel, as a part of their official work. In addition to the opportunities for doing them good which occur almost daily, and always every Sabbath, they may with great advantage have stated seasons, (say previous to each communion,) to assemble them together, and address them particularly concerning their privileges, obligations and duties. The regular and faithful catechizing of children depends also in a great degree upon the importance attached to it and the interest manifested in it by pastors. The duty of imparting this form of instruction primarily belongs to parents; and where circumstances are such as to render it expedient, teachers in Sabbath Schools, as well as other schools, may properly engage in it. But it is very apt to be neglected or attended to irregularly, even in the family, unless parents are occasionally reminded of their duty from the pulpit; and it affords them much encouragement to punctuality and fidelity, as well as exerts a favorable influence on the minds of the children, to have their pastors at stated periods and as often as practicable, engage personally in the work of catechizing; so far, at least, as to learn what proficiency has been made, and to secure among the people, old and young, a lively and continued interest in the exercise. All the reformed churches had their catechisms. In the preface of one of those penned by Luther,* he says, "The du-

*Luther wrote two—a larger and shorter.

ty of the faithful and watchful father demands, that *once a week in the least*, he should make trial by examination of his children and family, and discover what they understand or have learnt; solemnly constraining them, in case of ignorance, to learn these things thoroughly." To ministers he says, "I therefore beseech and conjure all you, who are pastors and preachers, that you solemnly discharge your duty, and take care of the people committed to you by God. And this you will best do, by joining us in inculcating this catechism every where, and *especially on the young*." Calvin's catechism was extensively circulated, both on the continent and in England and Scotland. In France it was publicly expounded by order of the national Synod. His own estimate of the importance of this mode of instruction is expressed in the following most decided language: "The church of God cannot be without a catechism; for therein the true seed of doctrine is to be contained, from which at length the pure and seasonable harvest will be matured, and from this the seed may be multiplied abundantly." Before the close of that century a catechism was penned with scripture proofs, by a committee appointed for this purpose, by the General Assembly of the church of Scotland, which was ordered to be used in families and schools; and pastors were especially charged with the duty of placing it in the hands of the people, and also of examining, prior to each communion, as to their proficiency. At a later period, (A. D. 1639) they were enjoined to have catechising in some

part of the parish every week. This was four years before the meeting of that famous assembly of Divines at Westminster, one of the fruits of which was the production of a catechism, which for accuracy and precision, simplicity and perspicuity, stands unrivaled among all similar productions in any age of the world. Let it have a place in every family and be treasured up in the memories of all our children. Next to the study of the bible, scarcely any thing will be found more valuable.

Once more; the private members of the church ought to take a special interest in these lambs of the flock. Their baptism was a particular introduction to the friendly and christian attention of the Lord's people. It was a virtual request for their prayers and counsels. Above all, it was a solemn injunction addressed to each of the members of the church by the Lord of the covenant, in whose name the ordinance was administered, saying, "Give ear, O my people"—hide not from these children whom I hereby commit to thee, what you "have heard and known"—"showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done"—"that the generations to come may know them, even the children which shall be born; who shall arise and declare them to their children, that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." See Ps. 78: 1-7; and Horne's commentary on the same. As is taught in that passage, it is by the use of means such as these, em-

ployed not only by parents, but also by the members of the church, with reference to the rising generation, and particularly with those youth and children whom God, by their baptism, has brought into so near relation to us, that the church is to be enlarged and perpetuated. The faithful "christian nurture" of the present generation, will secure, as a general rule, according to the Divine arrangement, the proper training of the next, and so on in successive ages, till the arrival of that happy period when "they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying know the Lord: for all shall know him, from the least to the greatest."

Christian reader! allow me to offer a few words of exhortation. Are you a parent? do not neglect the religious instruction of your children. You manifest an ardent desire for their temporal prosperity; why not for their eternal? In their infancy you dandle them on the knee of parental fondness, and watch over their welfare by day and by night; but how many prayers are recorded in heaven which you have offered up in their behalf? In their early childhood, you teach them to lisp the endearing names of father and mother, and notice with intense interest their growth, both of body and mind; but how much have you taught them concerning their Father in heaven, and the importance of giving their hearts to him? In their youth, all your tender anxieties are called into action for their intellectual improvement and their elevation in society; but how many earnest longings have you felt for their improvement

in Divine knowledge and their elevation to God's right hand? Which in your estimation is the more important? that your children should become learned and honorable in this world? or that they should become pious? that they acquire large estates and luxuriate in the abundance and splendor of wealth? or become heirs of the kingdom of God? If the latter, then act accordingly. Feel as strongly, and act as constantly and efficiently for the promotion of their spiritual good as most parents do for their temporal welfare, and we are authorized to assure you God will bless and save them. Adopt the opposite course, and though they *may* even then be converted, you will have much reason to fear a different result, and that in the day of final account their blood will be required at your hands.

Are you an officer or a private member of the church? or a minister of the gospel? Remember that the youth and children of the present generation are the germs of the future church; and that the character and even the existence of the church in time to come, will therefore depend upon the faithful and successful employment of the means which God has appointed for the conversion of those now entering upon the stage of life. Next to parents, you are responsible to God for the part you take in forming their religious characters. The church is, in an important sense, a school; baptized children are "disciples" or learners in this school; and you, in your appropriate places, are to perform the office of instructors; "teaching them to observe all things

whatsoever Christ has commanded you." Fulfil your trust with fidelity, and "your labor will not be in vain in the Lord."

Baptized children! Endeavor, I beseech you, to appreciate and improve the privilege you enjoy of being members of the church of Christ. Though this relation was formed, not by your own act, but by that of your parents, it should be prized no less on this account. You had no agency in your being born *rational* beings, and not brutes; yet you regard this as a circumstance demanding your warmest gratitude. You became citizens of the United States of America, without your agency; and yet you rejoice in that good Providence, which has thus distinguished you from millions of mankind, born under despotic civil governments, or what is far worse, in countries unblessed by the glorious gospel. So it was a great favor to you, that as soon as you began to live in this sinful world—yourselves being sinners—your parents besought, in your behalf, the grace of God to deliver you from sin, and caused you by your baptism, to be encircled as it were, with the bow of his holy covenant.

Take heed that you despise not your birth-right. By this course Esau lost his father's dying benediction; and by a similar course many a youth since has lost a much greater blessing, viz: the saving grace of God, and the everlasting inheritance of his redeemed people. What a bitter lamentation did Esau send up into his father's ears, when he discovered his folly! but it was too late. "He found no

place for repentance," [no disposition in his father to change his purpose,] "though he sought it carefully with tears." Such will be your doom ere long, if you "neglect this great salvation." Be not ashamed of your relation to the church, nor unmindful of the obligations which are thereby devolved upon you. Remember that you "are bound to perform all the duties of church members." To this end, secure without delay the renewal of your hearts; which was the primary object desired and hoped for as the result of your infant membership. Having by Divine grace obtained this, all other religious and moral duties which are required of you, will be performed cheerfully, nay, with the greatest delight. God will bless and honor you on earth, and receive you after death, to a more glorious membership in the "church of the first born, which are written in heaven."

ERRATA.

Two forms, extending from the 59th to the 82d page, passed through the press in the author's absence, in consequence of which more typographical errors appear there than in other portions of the book. Three of the most glaring the reader will please correct, viz: Erase the letter "S" in the word "days" over the cut, page 68, and the letter "d" in the word "intimated" at the top of page 79, and change "R" into "P" in the word "Ret." towards the bottom of page 73.

CONTENTS

OF THE SEVERAL PARTS;

TOGETHER WITH QUESTIONS FOR THE USE OF PARENTS IN
INSTRUCTING THEIR CHILDREN. FOR THE ANSWERS,
REFERENCE IS MADE TO THE PAGES WHERE
THEY MAY BE FOUND.

	PAGE.
PART I. <i>The Scriptural mode of administering Baptism.</i>	7
What is essential to the valid administration of Christian baptism?	7
Is any particular mode of applying water essential to its validity?	7
What are the two modes in use among christians?	7
Which of them is the more scriptural?	7
1. <i>Baptism of Christ.</i>	7
Was Christ's baptism intended as an example for us?	8
May not his baptism furnish some evidence as to the proper mode of administering it?	8
What mode does it favor most; immersion or sprinkling?	8
Can you state the argument in favor of sprinkling founded on Christ's baptism?	9
Will you give more at length the scripture proof that this argument is sound and conclusive?	9-16
First adduce the proof that Christ's baptism was a part of the ceremony by which he was inducted into his priestly office; page 10, and note page 57; and secondly that the priests were sprinkled with water, as a part of their induction into office.	14-15
Do these facts render it highly probable if not certain that Christ was baptized by sprinkling?	16
Is the argument weakened by the fact of his going down into the water?	16
How is his baptism represented in ancient engravings?	11
How early is the date of the oldest engraving of this kind which is known to be extant?	11
2. <i>Baptism of the Eunuch.</i>	
Where is the eunuch's baptism recorded?	17

	PAGE.
What portion of scripture was he reading when Philip entered his chariot?	17
What is said as to the manner in which Philip expounded that prophecy to him?	17-18
What proof is there that he said anything in his discourse about baptism?	18
What part of the prophecy from which he was speaking would furnish a suitable text for him to discourse on this subject?	18
What is the import of those words, "So shall he sprinkle many nations?"	21
What do they prove concerning the mode in which Philip baptized the eunuch?	21-22
3. <i>Other instances of Baptism recorded in Scripture.</i>	22
Where were the three thousand who were converted on the day of Pentecost?	22
Did they leave the house where they were assembled in order to receive baptism?	23
Was not Paul also baptized in the house?	22
How was it with Cornelius and his friends?	22
Where were the jailor and his household baptized?	22
If they were all baptized in the house, is it at all probable that they were immersed?	22
Do we read of a single instance in which the converts left the place where they were converted in order to receive baptism?	23
What does this prove concerning the mode?	23
In baptising Lydia and her household did not the candidates go to a river side in order to have the ordinance administered? or were they not there already previous to and at the time of Lydia's conversion?	23-24
For what purpose did the Jews resort to that place?	23-24
What is the import of the phrase, "where prayer is wont to be made?"	24
Does the circumstance of their being baptized there afford any evidence in favor of immersion?	24
4. <i>Evidence derived from Scripture facts and customs.</i>	24
Where were the Israelites baptized unto Moses?	27
What analogy is there between that and christian baptism?	27
How does it appear that we can with propriety use the one to illustrate the other?	27
By what mode were the Israelites baptized in the cloud and in the sea?	27-28

	PAGE.
Are the Jewish purifications called baptisms?	28
Were they performed by Divine appointment?	28
By what mode were they generally performed?	29
5. <i>Evidence from the blood of Christ and the influences of the Holy Spirit.</i>	29
What is Christ's blood called?	29
What is the origin of this phraseology?	29
What does it represent?	29
Does baptism represent the same thing?	29
What proof does this furnish in favor of sprinkling?	29
How are the influences of the Holy Spirit represented in Scripture?	29
Does the term pour, which sometimes occurs with reference to those influences, differ materially in sense from the word sprinkle? Note,	29
Are both words employed to describe the influences of the Holy Spirit?	30
Are these influences called baptism, with reference to the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost?	30
How then is it probable that this ordinance which was the symbol of those influences, was administered at that time?	30
What is the <i>design</i> of baptism?	30
Can you adduce proof of this from the Scriptures?	30-33
What argument is derived from this in favor of sprinkling or pouring?	33
6. <i>The word Baptize considered.</i>	33
What is the primary, radical sense of the word baptize?	34
From what circumstance did it come to be used in the sense of dip or immerse?	34
May it be used with equal propriety where dipping is out of the question?	34
What other way is there of ascertaining its meaning besides the etymology of the word?	34
If it means uniformly to immerse, could it with propriety have been employed to represent the Jewish purifications? or to describe the influences of the Holy Spirit?	34, 35
How were the Jewish purifications generally performed?	34
Are not the influences of the Holy Spirit always described by terms which denote pouring or sprinkling? and never by those which signify immersion?	35

	PAGE.
What evidence does Christ's baptism afford as to the import of the word baptize ?	35
Did Christ sanction the practice of immersion in religious purifications ?	35, 36
How does this bear on the meaning of the word baptize ?	35, 36
In using other words to express the same things which are represented by baptism, do the sacred writers use those which signify immerse ?	36
Does the word immerse ever occur in the bible ?	36
Does the word dip ever occur ?	36
In what way is it employed where the word is found ?	36
Is there an exception to this ?	36
In the case of Naaman, which is the only exception, is it clear that he immersed his whole body ?	36
How often do the words sprinkle, pour, drop, distil, shed, &c., occur in the bible, in passages having a bearing on this subject ?	36, 37
What do these facts prove as to the meaning of the word baptize ?	37
7. <i>The phrases went down into the water, &c.</i>	37
Do not learned men say that the words translated into and out of, are consistent with the idea that the persons baptized received the ordinance by the side of the water ?	37
Allowing the words all the force given them by the English words into and out of, is the evidence for immersion regarded even by immersionists themselves as amounting to anything more than probability ?	38
Can no good reason be given why Philip and the Eunuch went down into the water without supposing that the eunuch was immersed ?	88
May not a sufficient reason be assigned why Christ went into the Jordan except to be immersed ?	38
Suppose we could show no reason, would this weigh anything against the proof already adduced that Christ and the eunuch were baptized by sprinkling ?	39
Is the phrase "in Jordan" any stronger in favor of immersion than into and out of ?	39
If Christ was baptized "in Jordan," and yet was sprinkled ; is it not probable that the multitudes whom John baptized in Jordan, followed their Saviour's example in this respect, and were sprinkled too ?	39

Does John's baptizing in Enon because there was much water there prove that he immersed ?	39
For what purpose was much water needed unless for immersion ?	39
At the time John was baptizing in Enon, where were Christ and his disciples baptizing ?	40
Did they baptize great numbers ?	40
Is there any proof that there was much water in the place where they baptized ?	40
Admitting however the special convenience of much water, and even its close connexion with the ordinance of baptism, was there nothing in the religious purifications of the Jews, going to shew that a free use was probably made of water as a preparation for the ordinance of baptism ?	40
In the Jewish purifications and in their solemn approaches to God what were they required to do ?	40
Why was this previous bathing required ? and also the washing or changing of their garments ?	40
Was this previous bathing a part of the religious purification which succeeded, or only a preparation for it ?	40
Was the sprinkling which followed essential, without which the other passed for nothing ?	40
What does this shew concerning the use of much water in John's baptism, and how does it bear on the subject of sprinkling ?	41
How far is this view of the subject confirmed by the representations of christian baptism found in ancient engravings ?	41
What clue does it give, as to the manner in which baptism by immersion was probably introduced into the church ?	42
Does the phrase, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, refer to the mode of administering baptism ?	42
Suppose reference be had to the mode, would it prove that immersion is the only proper mode ? or would it not rather prove that sprinkling is ?	42
What is the true meaning of the passage ?	43
In the phrase "having our bodies washed with pure water," does the word <i>washed</i> , decide any thing as to the mode ?	43
Is it as consistent with sprinkling or pouring, as immersion ?	43
What light is thrown upon its meaning in this place by the preceding clause, "having our hearts <i>sprinkled</i> from an evil conscience ?	43

	PAGE
How will you explain the word <i>bodies</i> consistently with the idea of sprinkling ?	44
Can you give an example in scripture where the body is said to be annointed though this had been done to the head only ?	44
Why is the head by a figure of speech spoken of as the body ?	44
What does this show as to the proper place of applying the water in baptism ?	44
Suppose the term bodies be taken in the widest sense, may not water poured on the head be said in strict propriety of speech to wash the body, by its flowing down upon it ? especially when a religious and not a physical washing is intended ?	44
Give an example in Scripture analogous to this.	44
8. <i>A consideration of the phrase "buried with him by baptism."</i>	45
Does this shew that Christ was immersed ?	45
Is Christ's baptism referred to at all in these words ?	45
Is the imagery here employed derived from the Jordan, or from Christ's cross and sepulchre ?	45
Are Christ's sufferings at the close of his life sometimes called a baptism ?	45
May not the words furnish some evidence as to the <i>design</i> of baptism ? and so prove immersion by the analogy of the case ?	46
If baptism was designed to represent Chrit's burial and resurrection, what propriety was there of their practicing the rite, as was done, for several years, before the events typified by it had taken place ? or of continuing the type as a standing ordinance in the Church, after the occurrence of those events ?	46
If it was a mere memorial of those events, how does it differ from the Lord's Supper which was instituted for this express purpose ?	46
Does this phrase prove that the Roman and Colossian christians were baptized by immersion ? and if it does, will it shew that this was the only primitive mode ?	49
Is it not probable that no particular mode of baptism is referred to, but only its nature and import ?	49
How can this be made to appear ?	49, 50
What resemblance has any mode of baptism to Christ's agony and death ?	50
Does any mode of baptism resemble in a good degree the ancient mode of <i>burial</i> among the Jews ?	50
What other terms are employed going to prove that no reference is had to the mode ?	50

Suppose the nature of the obligations of baptism be referred to and not the mode, are the allusions to Christ's burial and resurrection appropriate and forcible?	53-54
What is necessary to be proved by our Baptist brethren before they can justify the exclusive ground they have assumed?	54
What amount of proof is sufficient to sustain the ground of those who prefer and practice sprinkling as being a more scriptural mode?	54-55
Suppose it were necessary to assume the position that only one mode is valid; for which mode have we the more proof from scripture, sprinkling or immersion?	56
How ought we to feel and act towards those who differ from us on this subject?	56
PART II. <i>Infant Baptism.</i>	59
Is it necessary in order to prove this doctrine conclusively that it should be enjoined by an express positive precept?	59
Is not a duty as binding if taught by necessary inference as by positive law?	59
By which of these modes do we ascertain the Divine will with respect to the observance of the first day of the week as the christian Sabbath?	59
Is not this kind of evidence, as it relates to the Sabbath, regarded as satisfactory by christians in general?	59
Is the proof for infant baptism positive or inferential?	59-60
What is the foundation principle on which the doctrine of infant baptism rests? <i>Ans.</i> Infant church-membership.	60
Have we not positive precept for infant church membership?	60
Does not infant baptism clearly follow from this?	60
1. <i>Infant Baptism proved from the identity of the Old and New Testament Church, and the Membership of Infants in the former.</i>	61
How do the scriptures uniformly speak of the church? in the singular number or plural?	61
Do they not use this language when speaking of the church in different ages of the world? and in such a manner as to convey the idea that they are always speaking of the same body?	61
At what time was the church commenced? <i>Note.</i>	62
When did it assume a form which in one peculiar feature relating to households, God designed should be perpetual?	61-62
Who were embraced in the covenant which God made with Abraham?	62

	PAGE.
Was that covenant the same kind of bond as that which unites together the christian church?	62
How do you prove that the Abrahamic covenant was a bond of ecclesiastical and not of political or civil union?	62
How many years had the covenant been made when the descendants of Abraham became a nation?	62
Did not the covenant require of adults who entered into it the same profession of faith as is required of an adult now when he unites with the christian church?	65
Was not the promise contained in that covenant substantially the same as that which is found in the new testament?	65
Was the Abrahamic covenant done away by the national covenant made at Sinai?	65-66
How did the latter differ from the former?	66
How did the introduction of the gospel dispensation affect the covenant made with Abraham? <i>Ans.</i> It was a fulfilment and confirmation of it.	66-69
Did not the covenant have respect to Christ? <i>Ans.</i> It was confirmed in Christ—it was the gospel of Christ preached to Abraham—and by faith in its promise he saw Christ's day and was glad.	69
When Christ expelled the Jews as a people from the church, did he tell them that he would form another and a different church, to be composed of believing Gentiles? or did he not say that the <i>same</i> kingdom, the privileges of which they then enjoyed, should be given to the Gentiles?	69-70
Under what figure does Paul speak of the church in the 11th chapter of Romans?	70
Who were represented by the natural branches?	70
Who by those wild by nature?	70
Were all of the natural branches broken off, or only some of them?	70
What continued to be the standing of those branches, i. e. those believing Jews, who were not broken off? Did they not retain their place in the same church of which they were members before Christ's advent?	70
When the Jews who are now unbelievers shall be converted to Christ, will they not be grafted into the same olive tree with the believing Jews who had not been broken off?	70
When the Jews who are now unbelievers shall be converted to Christ, will they not be grafted into the same olive tree from	

	PAGE.
which they were formerly broken off?	70
What do all these facts prove concerning the old and new testament church?	70-71
How does the identity of the church under the old and new testament dispensation prove the doctrine of infant baptism?	71
2. <i>Infant Baptism proved from Christ's treatment of little children.</i>	71
Is it certain that those children who were brought to Christ were very young?	71-72
What are the words which teach the right of such children to receive baptism?	72
What is meant by the words kingdom of heaven and kingdom of God, as here used?	72
What proof can you adduce that Christ meant by this phrase the visible church under the gospel dispensation? Three arguments are given—let them be all noticed.	73-74
Did not Christ say then, in effect, that little children would be members of the christian church? and if members have they not a right to receive baptism?	74
Was not Christ's <i>blessing</i> them a farther recognition of their church membership? and consequently of their right to christian baptism?	74-75
Suppose the words "of such is the kingdom of heaven" be regarded as referring to the kingdom of glory; do they not still furnish a good argument in favor of infant baptism?	76
3. <i>Infant Baptism proved from our Saviour's last commission and the teaching and practice of the Apostles in acting under it.</i>	79
Does the last commission of Christ to his Apostles say anything about infants? or does it not refer to adults only?	79
Can the words of the commission when taken by themselves be properly adduced either for or against infant baptism?	79-80
Does it follow because adults are required to <i>believe</i> previous to their baptism, that this is also required of infants before they are entitled to this ordinance?	79
Does the circumstance that Christ omitted to mention infants in the commission prove anything against their baptism?	80
Can any good reason be assigned for Christ's omitting to mention them except one which decidedly favors infant baptism?	80
Was it necessary to mention infants in that commission in or-	

	PAGE.
der to authorize their baptism?	80
Can you give any reasons for believing that the Apostles would understand Christ's omitting to mention infants as a virtual command to baptize them? Three reasons are given for this—let none of them be overlooked.	80-81
Is it not fair to conclude that if Christ had designed to exclude infants from baptism he would have expressly excepted them in that commission?	82
When Peter, acting under that commission, exhorted the people on the day of Pentecost to repent and be baptized, what reason did he urge?	82
Did not the <i>promise</i> quoted from the prophet Joel have a further reference to the promise contained in the Abrahamic covenant? If so, how is it proved?	82-83
What is meant by the word <i>children</i> , as here used?	83-84
If Peter meant the same by children as was meant by the word <i>seed</i> in the Abrahamic covenant, would not the people understand him to teach that under the gospel dispensation their church privileges would not be abridged? but would be the same with respect to their families as they were under the old testament dispensation? i. e. that upon their believing in Christ their children as well as themselves would be entitled to baptism?	84
Do not the words "afar off," immediately following, corroborate this view of the subject? if so, can you explain how?	84-85
When Paul wrote to the Corinthian church concerning the propriety of a husband and wife's continuing to live together, one of them being a christian and the other a heathen, what reason did he give why they should do it?	85-86
What did he mean by the terms <i>unclean</i> and <i>holy</i> , as applied to their children?	86
Can you adduce scripture proofs to show that this is the sense of the words?	87
If the word <i>unclean</i> means some thing which could not be devoted to God, and the word <i>holy</i> , that which might be devoted, how does this show that Paul intended to teach from it the privilege of christian parents to present their children to God in baptism?	87
Was not baptism designed in part as a symbol of dedication to God?	87

What different interpretation has been given by some to these words?	87
Can you show this to be incorrect?	87-88
In carrying into <i>practice</i> our Saviour's last commission to baptize, how did Paul proceed in the case of Lydia?	88
Who was Lydia? a native Jewess or a proselyte?	88
In introducing proselytes into the Jewish church were not children baptized on the faith of their parents?	88
Suppose the record of the baptism of Lydia and her household had been designed to narrate their reception as proselytes into the Jewish church, could there be any doubt of the baptism of the children or domestics upon her faith?	91
Does not the word <i>me</i> , in the words addressed by Lydia to Paul, show that she alone believed, and that her household were baptized, not on their own faith, but hers?	91
What is the record of the Apostle's proceeding in the baptism of the jailor and his household?	91
Were not some, if not all, of the members of his family old enough to receive religious instruction?	92
Does this prove that they were baptized on their own profession of faith? or is it not sufficiently evident from the circumstances that they received baptism on the faith of the jailor?	92
What are the circumstances which go to establish this? There are two, let them be particularly noticed.	92-95
Does it weaken the evidence in favor of household baptism that the examples of it recorded in scripture are so few?	95-96
Are the cases on record opposed by any principles or facts of an opposite character?	96
Do not these examples illustrate the principles which have been established? and are they not corroborated by other historical facts alluded to in the bible and in ecclesiastical history?	96
4. <i>Infant Baptism proved from the history of proselyte baptism among the Jews, and the early history of baptism in the christian church.</i>	96
Was baptism practiced before the christian era? if so, at how early a period? This question is answered in several particulars, which see.	96-98
Was <i>infant</i> baptism practiced prior to Christ's advent? if so, under what circumstances? For an answer to this see No. 7 of the particulars just referred to.	98-101

	PAGE.
What is the argument from this in favor of infant baptism now?	
This is answered in three particulars, to all which we invite special attention.	101-103
In the case of proselyte baptism, was circumcision practiced also at the same time in connexion with it?	103
Was not circumcision laid aside by Gentile believers after the coming of Christ and baptism alone continued without the former? if so, why?	103-104
Did not the believing Jews after they embraced Christ continue to practice infant circumcision for some time under the sanction of the Apostles? if so, why was this permitted?	104-105
What do these facts prove with regard to the practice of infant baptism in the Gentile churches; and also with regard to the doctrine of infant membership in the churches composed of Jews?	106
In the controversy between Jewish and Gentile believers about circumcision, did the question in dispute relate to the church membership of children, or only to the disuse of that particular rite?	106
If the Gentile churches had not maintained the doctrine of infant membership by baptizing their children, would not their Jewish brethren most certainly have called them to account?	106-107
From the record found in the Acts of the Apostles does there not appear to have existed perfect harmony of sentiment between the Jewish and Gentile churches on this point?	108-109
How can you account for Jewish believers gradually laying aside circumcision and practicing baptism except on the supposition that they came at length to see that baptism took the place of circumcision, and was to be administered as the other had been; i. e. to children as well as adults? It cannot be accounted for in any other way.	108-109
After the death of the Apostles, do we learn from ecclesiastical history that infant baptism was practiced? and that those who practiced it regarded themselves as acting in accordance with Apostolic example?	109-111
What testimonies are recorded in favor of it by eminent christian fathers during the first three centuries?	109-110
Have we any proof that a single individual of any note opposed it during that period? if so, on what ground?	110
Can you now recapitulate in a brief manner the arguments which have been adduced in favor of infant baptism?	111-113
In order to invalidate these arguments, is it sufficient to quote	

	PAGE.
those texts of scripture which relate to believer's baptism?	113
Do not pedo-baptists, i. e. those who baptize children, hold to believer's baptism as well as their baptist brethren?	113-114
What must be proved by those who are opposed to infant baptism before they can overthrow it?	114-115
Ought we not to treat with respect and kindness those who differ from us on this subject?	116
Should our christian charity be manifested by attaching small importance to this doctrine? or acting as though it were a matter of indifference? if not, how?	116
PART III. <i>Importance of Christian Baptism</i>	119
What are the principal points which it is proposed to discuss in this part?	119
1. <i>Baptism not a saving ordinance.</i>	119
What passages of scripture are chiefly relied upon as proof-texts by those who hold that baptism when rightly administered always conveys grace to the person baptized?	119
Do those texts prove this doctrine?	120-121
What is the true exposition of those passages?	120-121
By what considerations can you disprove the doctrine that water baptism is always saving? The four arguments first given are designed to refute the doctrine with regard to adults. Let these arguments be duly considered.	121-122
What is the real question at issue when we speak of the baptismal regeneration of infants?	123
Do the scriptures any where give authority to any mere man to impart grace to an infant by virtue of his office as a minister of the Gospel?	123
Do they teach that the saving influences of the Holy Spirit are invariably communicated through this ordinance?	123-124
May not this sometimes occur? and would it not occur more frequently if parents in presenting their children to God exercised stronger faith?	124
What reasons can you assign why it does not occur always? Three reasons are given, to all of which we invite attention.	124
2. <i>The baptism of believers a seal of a public profession of religion.</i>	125
What evidence can you give from the scriptures that adult baptism involves in it a public profession of faith in Christ?	125
Is it a duty for believers to make a public profession of religion?	125
Suppose a person refuses to perform this duty through shame	

	PAGE.
to acknowledge Christ before men; can he reasonably expect to reach heaven?	125-126
Suppose then he refuses to be baptized for the same reason; in what light does this view of the case present the importance of baptism as connected with our salvation?	125-126
Does baptism imply an assent to the cardinal doctrines of the bible?	126
What doctrines in particular do we express our belief in when we receive christian baptism?	126
How does baptism operate as an incentive to a holy life?	126-127
3. <i>Benefits of Infant Baptism.</i>	127
How does baptism benefit a little child who, it may be, is so young when it is administered that he is unconscious of the transaction? Three answers are given, which we commend to the candid and serious consideration of the reader.	127-130
If the ignorance of the child prevents his receiving benefit from the transaction, will it not follow that infants cannot be saved?	128
If infants are capable of being saved, are they not capable of deriving benefit from the means of salvation?	128
Is not one of these means their solemn dedication to God by pious parents?	128
Though infants cannot act intelligently and understandingly, cannot their parents act thus?	128
If infant baptism is an ordinance of God, is it not pleasing to him when parents attend to it?	128
Is it ever a useless or vain thing for us to serve God?	128
Will not God be more likely to bless those children whose parents devoutly and prayerfully recognize his holy covenant in such a way as pleases him, than he will if their parents manifest a different spirit and pursue a different course?	128
Did not Samuel receive benefit from his early dedication to God?	129
Will you give some account of Samuel's character and life?	129
After the child becomes old enough to be instructed, does not the promise made by his parents at his baptism, operate as a strong motive to make them faithful in instructing him?	129
Did not the covenant relation of the Jews to God influence them to diligence in teaching their children the holy scriptures?	130
Is it not beneficial to children to be brought into a close and tender relation to the church?	130

	PAGE.
What is the relation which baptized children sustains to the church?	130
Are they members of the church in the same sense as they will be when they become pious and take upon themselves those covenant vows made by their parents in their behalf?	130-133
How can you illustrate this difference?	133
Of what benefit is this kind of membership to them?	133-134
What is the connection between baptism and the Lord's Supper?	134
Of what are both of them the signs or seals?	134
How do they differ from each other?	134
Is it proper to administer baptism more than once? if not, why?	134
Why is it otherwise with the Lord's Supper?	135
Is baptism a seal of the covenant of grace to infants as well as adults?	135
What is the difference in this respect between infant and adult baptism?	135
Wherein lies the benefit of infant baptism as it stands related to the Lord's Supper?	135-136
Is it not the duty of baptized children to come to the Lord's table?	136
Does it follow from this that children have a right to the Lord's Supper merely because they have been baptized, without regard to other qualifications?	136
Did the Jews admit children to the Passover without regard to their character? Note.	136-137
What qualifications are requisite to a worthy partaking of the Lord's Supper?	136
Ought not these qualifications to be diligently sought by baptized children?	136
Does infant baptism in all cases secure such a fitness as is required for the worthy partaking of the Lord's Supper? if not, what is its tendency to produce this result?	137
What is the testimony of the distinguished commentator, Matthew Henry, as to the beneficial effect of his infant baptism on himself?	137-138
In what respects has infant baptism a beneficial effect on parents? This is answered in two particulars, the latter of which is somewhat enlarged upon. We bespeak for them the careful and serious attention of parents.	138-141
How does infant baptism benefit the church?	141

	PAGE.
Does infant baptism benefit mankind at large? if so, in what way?	142-143
4. <i>The time and manner in which Infant Baptism should be attended to, and the Duties growing out of it.</i>	144
At how early an age was circumcision to be performed among the Jews?	144
Why no earlier than this?	144
Could it be delayed beyond that time in ordinary circumstances without sin?	144
How did God punish Moses for his neglect in this matter?	144-145
What was the punishment threatened in the Abrahamic covenant for omitting circumcision? Note.	145
What is supposed to be meant by the phrase cut off from among the people? Note.	145
At what age was this done if circumcision was delayed till that time? Note.	145
Might the expelled person be restored again? Note.	145
Could a child be circumcised on his parent's faith after a certain age? if not, how old might the child be? Note.	146
May not this be a suitable rule for parents now in case of baptism? Note.	146
What principle is involved in the requirement to circumcise Jewish children on the eighth day?	144
Is not prompt obedience to God in discharging this duty more acceptable to him than an obedience which is tardy and reluctant?	145
Does not needless delay indicate a lack of appreciating the ordinance as a privilege?	145
In what manner should the ordinance be attended to?	146
What duties are imposed by this ordinance upon parents?	146-149
Can you give some examples of parental fidelity, and their beneficial effect on their families?	149
What did God pronounce upon Eli for his neglect of duty towards his sons?	149-150
What are some of the duties devolving on baptized children with reference to this ordinance?	150
Can you repeat the covenant prepared by Mr. Philip Henry, father of the commentator, for the use of his children?	150-151
What did he tell them would be the benefit of this covenant to them if they would adopt it as their own?	151
Will not the same course be as likely to benefit children now	

	PAGE.
as it was then?	151
What duties are incumbent upon the officers of the church towards baptized children?	151
What kind of "care, government and discipline" should they exercise over this class of members, judicial or only parental?	151-152
Are pastors especially charged with the care of baptized children?	152
In what particular ways should he seek to promote their spiritual good?	153
Does the catechising of children belong primarily to parents or to pastors?	153
May not pastors render great assistance to parents in this work, by manifesting an interest in it?	153
In what respect is catechetical instruction important to the church?	153
In what estimate was it held by the reformers?	153-154
Which of them penned catechisms for the instruction of the people, and especially of the young?	153-154
What mode was adopted in Scotland to secure the regular and faithful catechising of children?	154
What catechism is the best now extant? and when and by whom was it formed?	155
Next to the bible will not the study of this catechism be likely to prove more beneficial to our children than almost anything else?	155
What obligations rest on the private members of the church to seek the spiritual good of baptized children?	155
What may we expect to follow as the happy result, if these obligations are faithfully met, by all the members of the church?	156
Which is the more important, that our children become rich and great, or that they become pious?	156-157
Ought not parents to feel more anxious about this matter than they do?	156-157
What may they do to secure the salvation of their children?	157
Ought baptized children to regard their baptism as a great privilege?	158
Suppose they neglect to improve this privilege, what will be the consequence?	158-159



INDEX.

	PAGE.
Adam, the church commenced with him, - - - - -	62
Abraham, covenant with, - - - - -	61, 62, 65
Do. beholding Christ's day, - - - - -	69
Do. his faithfulness to his family, - - - - -	146, 149
Aaron and his sons, how consecrated to their office, - - - - -	15
Adult baptism not to be administered except to believers, - - - - -	79, 113
Do. do. seal of a public profession of religion, - - - - -	125
Apostles, their commission to preach and baptize, - - - - -	79
Do. their teaching and practice under it, - - - - -	82, 85, 88, 91
Assembly at Westminster, the excellent catechism prepared by them, - - - - -	155
Babes, salvation of those dying in infancy, - - - - -	76
Baptize, import of the word, - - - - -	33, 34
Baptism, what is essential to its validity, - - - - -	7
Do. not a saving ordinance, - - - - -	119
Do. design of, - - - - -	30, 35
Do. by sprinkling a proper mode, - - - - -	7
Do. infants proper subjects, - - - - -	59, 60
Do. to be administered once only and why, - - - - -	134, 135
Baptist, John probably baptized infants, - - - - -	101
Do. do. did not probably immerse, - - - - -	39
Baptists demand positive proof, - - - - -	59
This can be furnished with regard to infant membership which is the foundation of infant baptism, - - - - -	60
Baptized children, their relation to the church, - - - - -	130
Do. do. duties and privileges of, - - - - -	150
Do. do. duties of parents, ministers and churches towards them, - - - - -	146, 151, 152
Bathing in water required of the Jews as a preparation for the rite of sprinkling, and also for any solemn act of religious worship, why, - - - - -	40
This may serve to explain some allusions in the new testament relating to baptism, - - - - -	41
And also how immersion ever came to be practiced, - - - - -	42
Believer's baptism, held to and practiced by pedo-baptists as well as by their baptist brethren, - - - - -	113, 114
Benefits of infant baptism, - - - - -	127
Bible, duty of reading and teaching it to our children, - - - - -	146, 149
Blessings, Christ's blessing little children, what it denoted, - - - - -	75, 76

	PAGE.
Blood of Christ called the blood of sprinkling, - - - -	29
Bodies washed with pure water, the meaning of, - - - -	43, 44
Born of water, what meant by it, - - - -	120
Branches, the natural broken off and those wild by nature graft- ed into the good olive tree, - - - -	70
Buried with Christ by baptism, - - - -	45
Catechetical instruction, duty of, - - - -	153, 154
Calvin, his views concerning catechising, - - - -	154
Carthage, council of relating to infant baptism, - - - -	110
Ceremonial law did not annul the Abrahamic covenant, - - - -	65, 66
Ceremonial cleansing, how usually performed, - - - -	28, 29
Charity to be exercised towards those who differ from us, - - - -	4, 5, 56, 57
Christ, circumcised in his infancy, - - - -	76
Do. never afterwards intimated that it was useless, - - - -	76, 79
Do. therefore baptism not useless to infants now, - - - -	76
Do. the design of his baptism, - - - -	8, 9
Do. not intended as an example to us yet may aid us in de- termining the proper mode, - - - -	8
Children, little children brought to Christ, - - - -	71, 72
meaning of the term children as used by Peter in his discourse on the day of Pentecost, - - - -	83
baptized children members of the church, - - - -	130
Church, old and new testament church the same, - - - -	61
duty of the church to baptized children, - - - -	151
Christian dispensation, did not abrogate the Abrahamic cove- nant, - - - -	66, 69
Christian baptism, the rite not first instituted by Christ, but adopted and perpetuated by him from the old testament dis- pensation, - - - -	103
Circumcision, when instituted, - - - -	61
Do. what a sign and seal of, - - - -	65
Do. at what age to be performed, - - - -	144
Do. sinfulness of unnecessary delay, - - - -	144, 145
Do. why not continued under the new testament dis- pensation, - - - -	103
Do. gradually superseded and displaced by baptism; - - - -	107
Clemens Alexandrinus, and other christian fathers on baptismal regeneration, (Note p. 109, 110,) - - - -	109
Colossians, no evidence of their being immersed, - - - -	48, 49
Coming up out of the water, - - - -	37
Commission of the Apostles, import of, - - - -	79
Congregation of Israel, to be cut off from, (Note,) - - - -	145
Conscience, sprinkled from an evil one, - - - -	43
Covenant, Abraham entering into covenant, - - - -	63
Do. a bond not of civil but ecclesiastical union, ever- lasting, - - - -	62
Cuts illustrating christian baptism, - - - -	11, 19, 25, 32, 90
Cyprian, council in his time concerning the baptism of infants prior to the eighth day after their birth, - - - -	110
Death, baptized into Christ's death, - - - -	49
Disciple, as used in the Apostolic commission [Gr.] nearly sy- nonymous with proselyte, - - - -	81
Dispensation, gospel dispensation did not nullify the Abrahamic covenant, - - - -	66

	PAGE.
Dodridge, baptismal regeneration, (Note,) - - -	109, 110
Duties arising from baptism, - - -	141
Eighth day, why circumcision was to be performed on that day, -	144
Do. how long it might be delayed with impunity, (Note) -	145
Do. what punishment was threatened for neglect, (Note) -	145
Do. judgment sent upon Moses, - - -	144, 145
Do. after what age a child could not be circumcised on the faith of his parents, (Note,) - - -	145
Do. how far this should be an example to us with refe- rence to baptism, (Note,) - - -	146
Eli, consequences of not restraining his sons, - - -	149, 150
Enon, John baptizing in, - - -	39
Engravings, ancient ones illustrating the mode of baptism, 11, 19, 25, 32	
Eunuch, baptized by sprinkling, - - -	21
Examples of household baptism, - - -	88, 91
Faith, circumcision a sign and seal of, - - -	65
Do. baptism a sign and seal of the same, - - -	65
Family worship, duties of, - - -	146, 149
Fidelity, parental rewarded - - -	149
Do. the want of it followed by Divine judgments, - - -	150
French churches taught and expounded Calvin's catechism, -	154
Garments, the Jews required to wash or change them as a pre- paration to approach God, why, - - -	40
Gentile proselytes, circumcised and baptized, - - -	98, 99
Circumcision laid aside and baptism continued after Christ's death, - - -	103
Gill, Dr. his views concerning the Jewish Passover, (Note,) -	137
God, Abraham entering into covenant with - - -	61, 63
Going down into the water, - - -	37
Gospel preached to Abraham, - - -	69
Gospel dispensation, the carrying to their completion the pro- mises of the Abrahamic covenant, - - -	69
Do. do. how its ordinances differ from those of the old testament, - - -	103, 104
Gregory Nazianzen, his testimony concerning proselyte baptism, -	100
Greek, we can arrive at the meaning of the word <i>baptize</i> without a knowledge of Greek, - - -	34, 35
Hammond, Dr. his views and those of Selden concerning the origin of proselyte baptism, - - -	100
Heathen, their conversion prayed for on the ground of the pro- mise contained in God's covenant, - - -	143
Henry, Philip, his manner of instructing his children, - - -	150
Do. Matthew, his testimony concerning the benefits of his infant baptism, - - -	137
History of Proselyte baptism, - - -	98
Holy, import of the term when it relates to Jewish ordinances, -	87
Do. used in the same sense by Paul, - - -	87
Holy Spirit, baptism of - - -	30, 31
Household baptism, instances of - - -	88, 91, 95
Husband, unbelieving sanctified by the believing wife, - - -	85
Identity of the old and new testament church, - - -	61
Immersion, the word not found in the bible, - - -	36
Do. cannot be proved to have been practiced during the	

	PAGE.
Apostolic age, - - - - -	56
Do. if it could be this would not establish immersion as the only proper and valid mode, - - - - -	54
Do. how the practice of immersion was probably intro- duced, - - - - -	42
Importance of baptism, - - - - -	119
Infant church-membership proved, - - - - -	61, 72, 111
Infant baptism, proof of, - - - - -	59
Christ and John Baptist baptized infants, - - - - -	101, 102
Do. do. importance of, - - - - -	119
Do. do. with what frame of mind it ought to be per- formed, - - - - -	146
Do. do. should be attended to promptly, - - - - -	145
Infant salvation, our belief in - - - - -	76
Do. do. its bearing on the doctrine of infant baptism, - - - - -	76, 128
Inferential proof sufficient to establish any doctrine or duty, - - - - -	60
Do. do. regarded by christians as conclusive when ap- plied to the christian Sabbath, - - - - -	59
Ireneus, his testimony concerning infant baptism, - - - - -	109
Isaiah, prophecy of explained by Philip, - - - - -	17, 18, 19
Israelites, baptism of in the cloud and in the sea, - - - - -	25
Jailor, baptism of and his household, - - - - -	91
Do. he only was a believer, - - - - -	92-95
Jews, their familiar acquaintance with the holy scriptures, - - - - -	130
Jewish purifications usually performed by sprinkling, - - - - -	28, 29
Jewish christians practiced circumcision by the sanction of the Apostles, - - - - -	105
but Gentile believers were excused from it, - - - - -	105
the bearing of these facts on the subject of in- fant baptism, - - - - -	106
Jerusalem, council at with reference to circumcision among Gentile believers, - - - - -	104
Joel, prophecy of quoted by Peter, - - - - -	82
John the Baptist, how he baptized, - - - - -	39
Do. do. his baptism not introduced as a new thing, - - - - -	97
Do. do. probably baptized infants, - - - - -	101
Do. do. but not christian baptism, (Note,) - - - - -	102
Jordan, baptizing in - - - - -	39
Josephus, his testimony concerning baptism among the ancient Jews, - - - - -	98
the practice very common among them before Christ's advent, - - - - -	97, 98
Justin Martyr, concerning circumcision and baptism, - - - - -	109
Kingdom of heaven and kingdom of God, meaning of - - - - -	73, 74
Kingdom taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles, - - - - -	73
Little children, those brought to Christ were small, - - - - -	72
Do. do. for what purpose brought to him, - - - - -	74
Lord's supper, qualifications for, - - - - -	136
Luther, his views concerning catechising, - - - - -	153, 154
Lydia and her household baptized, - - - - -	88
she alone had faith, - - - - -	91
Maimonides, a learned Jew, quoted by Dr. Wall with regard to proselyte baptism, - - - - -	98

	PAGE.
Many nations, Christ's sprinkling them,	21
Ministers of the Gospel, their duty to baptized children,	152, 153
Minors, baptized children are such with regard to church privileges,	133
and also to church discipline, which is to be parental rather than judicial,	151, 152
Mode of baptism, sprinkling or pouring more scriptural than immersion,	7
Moses, baptism of the Israelites to him in the cloud and sea,	27
Much water, why resorted to by John for baptizing,	39
Naaman dipping himself seven times in Jordan,	36
Obligations involved in our baptism,	125
Officers of the church, their duty to baptized children,	151, 152
and to christian parents,	151
Olive tree, the church represented under the figure of	70
Do. do. Jews cut off and believing Gentiles grafted in,	70
One Lord, one faith, one baptism,	42
Ordinances of the new testament, only two, and how they stand related to each other,	134, 135
Origen, his testimony concerning infant baptism,	110
Parents, their duty to their children both with regard to their baptism and religious training,	144-147
parents who have been baptized but have not come to the Lord's supper, how to be treated if they request baptism for their children,	139-141
Passover, what qualifications were requisite in order to partake of it, (Note,)	136
how old persons were required to be,	137
what character must be possessed,	137
Pastors, their care for the lambs of the flock,	152
Paul was baptized in the house,	22
how he taught and practiced with regard to the baptism of children,	85, 91
Pentecost, baptism of three thousand,	22
Peter, what language he employed concerning children,	82
Pharisees, baptism not regarded by them as a new thing in our Saviour's time,	97
Philip preaching to the eunuch, and baptizing him by sprinkling,	17
Phrases relating to baptism, explanation of	37, 39, 42, 45
Pouring a proper mode of baptism,	29
Practice of the Apostles,	88, 108
and of the church immediately afterwards,	109, 110
Prayer, duty of for baptized children,	146
Priests, how set apart to their office,	14, 15
Prison, the jailor baptized in the outer court of	23
Profession of religion, the duty of, and baptism a seal of,	125, 126
Promise of Abrahamic covenant confirmed in christ,	69
fulfilled in part by the introduction of the gospel dispensation,	61
made to believers and their children,	84
Proof positive for infant church membership,	60
Prophecy of Isaiah explained by Philip,	17
Do. of Joel referred to by Peter,	82

	PAGE.
Proselytes, history of proselyte baptism,	96
Proseuche a place of prayer, Paul preached there to Lydia and o' hers,	24, 88
Purifications, Jewish performed by sprinkling,	28, 29
Recapitulation of the arguments for infant baptism,	111
what must be proved in order to overthrow them,	114
Regeneration, baptismal not scriptural,	119-124
Religious instruction, duty of	129
Remission of sins, not conferred by baptism,	121, 122
Repentance and faith connected with forgiveness of sins,	121
Ressurrection of Christ, how associated with our baptism into his death,	53
Righteousness, what righteousness Christ fulfilled by his baptism,	9
River side, why Paul went there to preach,	23, 24
Roman christians, no proof of their being immersed,	46, 49
Sabbath christian, the authority of established conclusively by inferential reasoning,	59
Samuel, his early dedication to God and its benefits,	129
Saving ordinance, no external ordinance saving in itself,	123
how rendered saving,	137
Saviour, baptism of not by immersion but sprinkling,	8
Do. design of his baptism,	9
Scriptures, duty of reading them to our families,	146
Scotland, church of her care in catechising the children of the church,	154
Sea, baptism of the Israelites in,	25
Seal and sign, what are the sacraments signs and seals of,	134
Seed, meaning of the term in the Abrahamic covenant,	84
the same is meant by <i>children</i> in Peter's sermon,	83, 84
Selden, see Hammond, their views concerning the origin of among the Jews,	100
Simon Magus baptized without becoming a true christian,	122
Sinai covenant, did not abrogate the covenant made with Abraham,	65, 66
Shorter catechism, study of	155
Spirit Holy, effusion of	30
Do. do. baptism of,	31
Sprinkling, a proper mode of baptism,	7
Do. the usual mode of performing religious purifications among the Jews,	29
Subjects, infants proper subjects of baptism,	59
Supper, duty of baptized persons to partake of the Lord's supper,	150
yet they are not to come without previous preparation,	136
Talmud, Jewish concerning proselyte baptism,	98
Teach, meaning of in the Apostolic commission where two Greek words are so rendered,	81
Unclean, meaning of the term as used in scripture,	87
Wall, Dr. his History of Infant Baptism,	98
Washing of regeneration, import of	120
Water, bodies washed with, what meant by it,	43, 44
Went down into the water,	37
Wife, unbelieving sanctified by believing husband,	85

	PAGE
Worship, duty of family worship, - - - - -	149
Young children belong to Christ's kingdom, - - - - -	71
Do. do. training up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, - - - - -	146
Zaccheus and his household restored by Christ to their former church privileges, - - - - -	93

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